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Edited by Elinore Bruce





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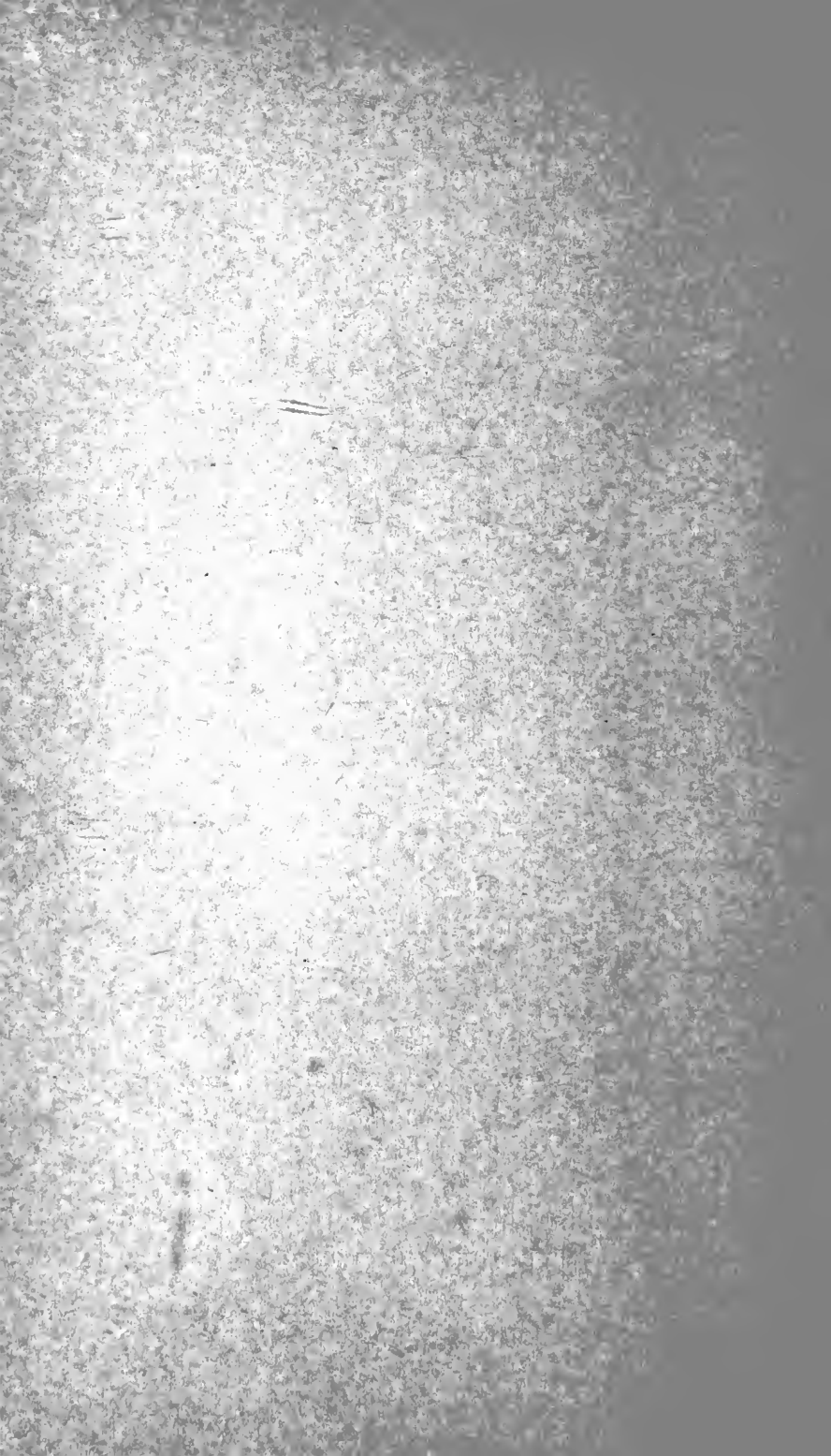
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YOUR CHILD

FROM SIX TO TWELVE

Edited by Elinore Bruce



# Your Child from Six to Twelve

Edited by  
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LONDON



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**AWARD BOOKS are published by  
Universal-Award House, Inc., a subsidiary of  
Universal Publishing and Distributing Corporation,  
235 East Forty-fifth Street, New York, N.Y. 10017**

**TANDEM BOOKS are published by  
Universal-Tandem Publishing Company Limited  
14 Gloucester Road, London SW7, England**

***Manufactured in the United States of America***

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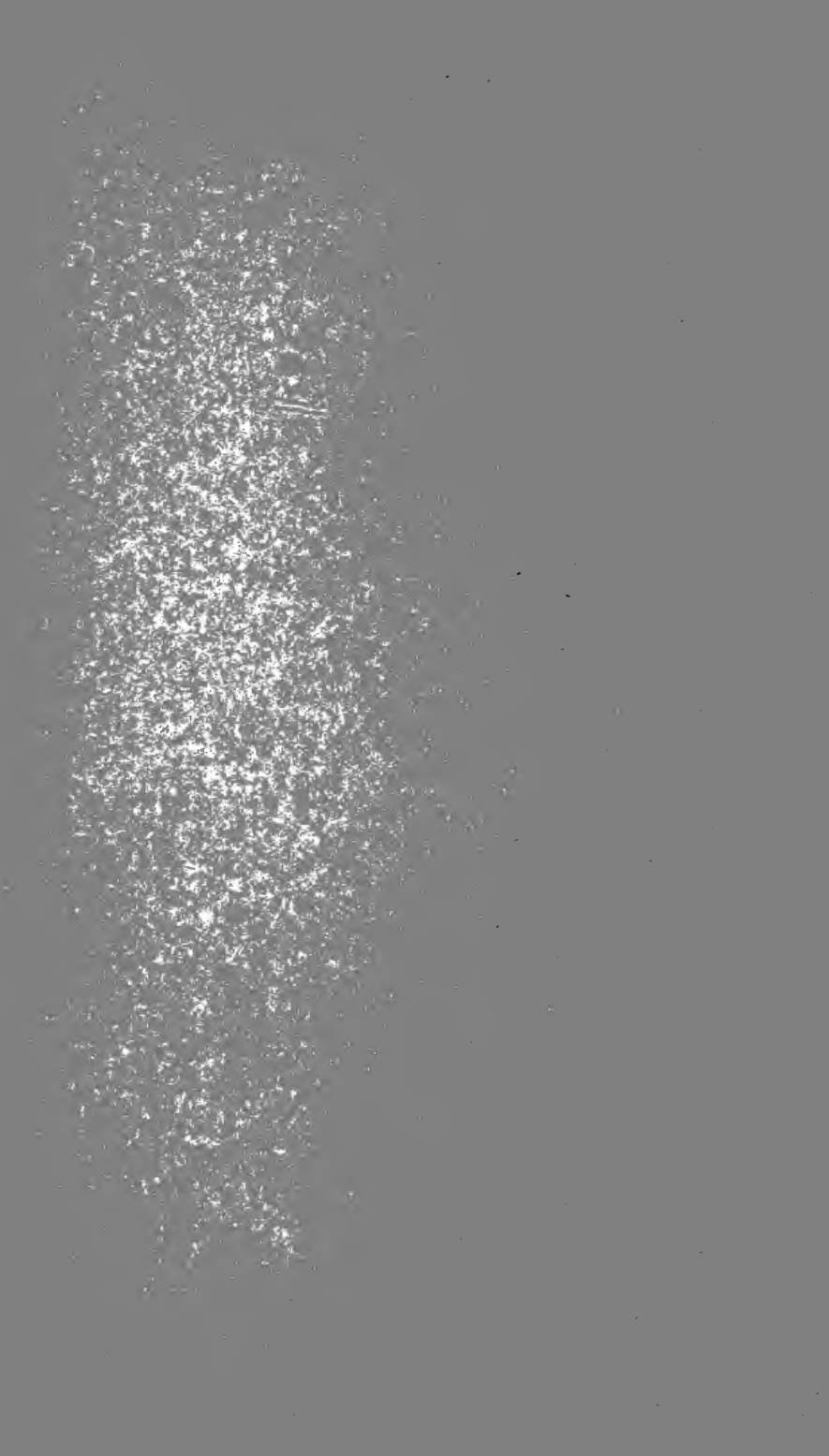
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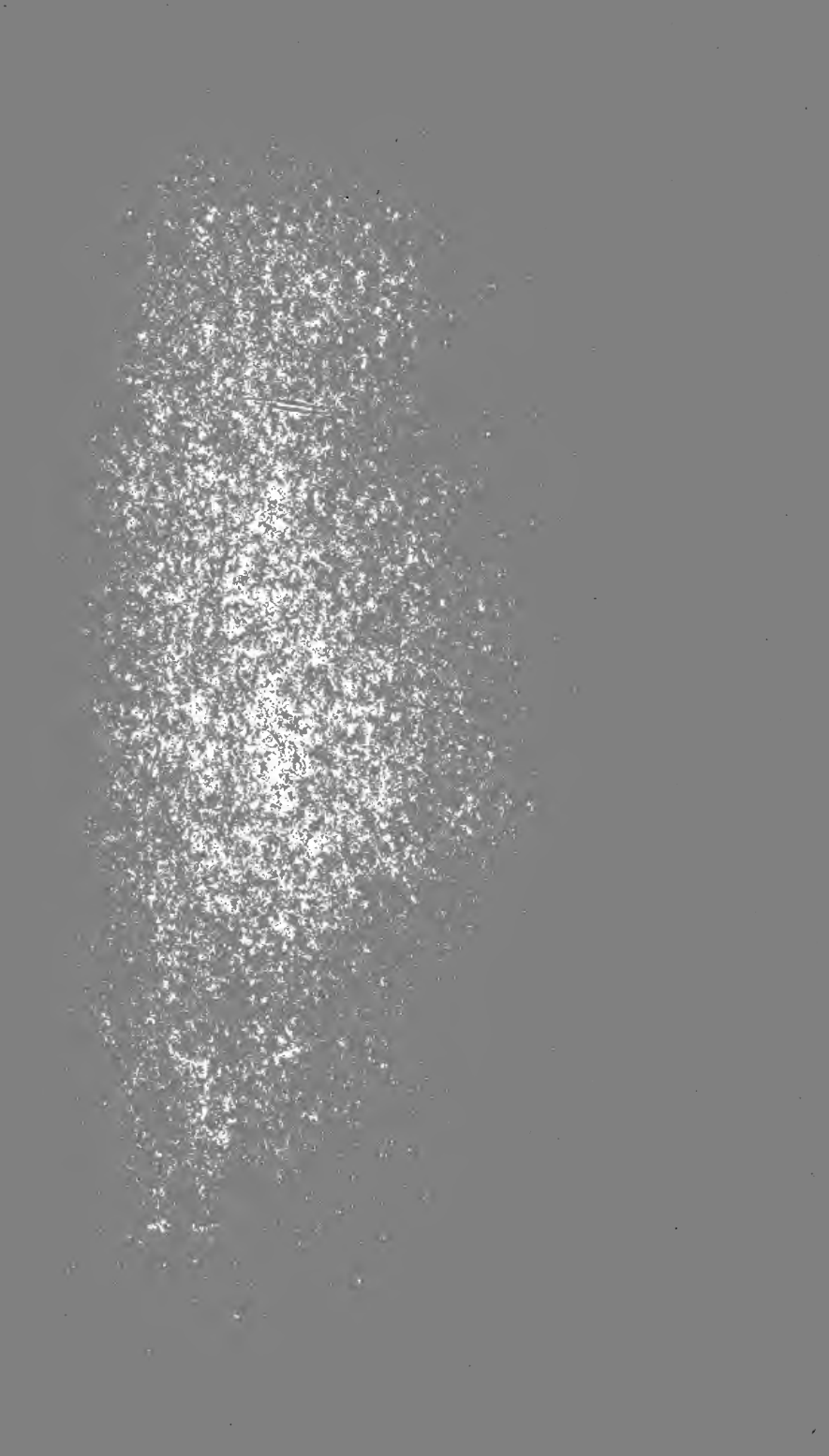
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**Your Child  
from  
Six to Twelve**



## Foreword

THIS book is for mothers and fathers who are both blessed and bewildered by their six- to twelve-year-old children. It cannot promise to give sure answers to all the questions that are likely to arise in your daily family life. But it does bring together, in a practical, easy-to-read way, the chief results of the research and observations of a large body of scientists who specialize in studying children and their families. These scientists represent many fields, such as: a number of medical specialties, education, psychology, sociology, home economics, and social work. It is our hope that the work of these scientists—and our interpretation of their work—will help you in your exciting, heart-warming, and worrisome job of being parents of six- to twelve-year-old children.

While this book is devoted specifically to childhood (ages six through twelve), many youngsters reach a stage of adolescence before they are twelve years old; therefore, some information—when applicable—is included which deals with that special stage of growth.

*Your Child from 6 to 12* profited from the time and attention given to its content by about seventy-five professional workers in fields concerned with children of these ages—physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, parent educators, and specialists in nutrition, child development, anthropology, and social science. In addition, a number of parents have read the material and made many suggestions that have enhanced its value and usefulness.

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search, under the direction of Elizabeth Herzog, Chief, Child Life Studies Branch, Division of Research, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE.**

## chapter 1

# YOUR CHILD IS A SPECIAL PERSON

Most children from ages six to twelve are in full bloom. At this stage, your child is no longer a baby, and the rewards and demands of adult life are far away. It is a time for slow, steady growth; for your child's gradual development into a separate person who is getting to know more and more about himself and his world. As your youngster reaches these middle years of childhood, he has won the freedom of an individual who can take care of himself in many ways. He is well past one period of rapid growth—and is now preparing for the spurt that will come just before adolescence. He still has the protection of adults who generally view him with kindly consideration because, after all, he is young and tender.

As he grows from age six to twelve, his life, and yours, won't be all love and peace. He is an eager adventurer who often finds, to his and your dismay, that he still has a lot to learn. You, his parents, and your child will often have different beliefs and desires. But together you can discover how to deal with the excitement, surprises, arguments, joys, and disappointments of everyday living in your family. Being human, in this sense, is not easy at any age. But it is surely worth the struggle.

Your child is a unique individual in your unique family. This is why there can be no sure set of rules for raising him. But there are certain principles of child growth that apply to him and to all other youngsters. How your child grows will depend partly on the self he inherited from both sides of his family, and partly on the experiences he has had, is having,

and will have, inside and outside his home. It will also depend, to a very great extent, on the understanding and direction that his parents give him.

### **Your child has a special personality**

In a parent's eyes, his own child stands out from the rest of the crowd. Your child's friends chatter and giggle around him, but his voice carries its particular, warm message to you. He is more important and exciting to you than all the others. This is what makes you the parent he needs to guide and nourish his life.

After living with him for six years, you know a lot about him. But, if you are like most parents, he sometimes worries or puzzles you. His behavior has many reasons, because he is human. Being a small human in your family, he especially needs to have these reasons understood by you. As you understand better what makes up his particular personality, you can enjoy him more. This understanding and enjoyment are vital to his health and success as a growing individual.

### **He feels and acts as an individual**

Your child's personality is made up of many forces. These forces work together to make him act as he does. They operate in their own particular pattern for each individual boy or girl. Your child's feelings are one of these very important forces, and he expresses them in his own particular way.

Perhaps your child is somewhat like Sammy who is quick to see when someone else feels hurt. He is all sympathy and gentle pity. But it works the other way, too. Tender Sammy turns to bellowing boy when his own feelings run into the barbed wire of "Don't" or "No."

Is your child, perhaps, more like Alice, who sulks or rejoices so quietly that it is hard to realize what she is feeling? Or like Phil, who skips along on the joyous notion that all is always fine?

Your child may be something like Alice or Sammy or Phil, but he also has his own special emotional style. He is not exactly like any of them because he is himself. But he is not completely different from them because they all have



something in common as young human beings. And all human beings share the joys and burdens of powerful emotions.

These emotions are at the very core of your child's life. They give him the push to live, to grow, to learn, to save himself from danger. Every person knows the warmth of love, the burden of despair, the thrill of excitement, the flame of anger, the cold frost of fear. These are tied to your child's most basic needs.

Your youngster is aware of those needs in his own special way. He learns to have his own particular feelings about them—and he learns to act upon these feelings in his own style. Like all human beings, his needs are for:

Food, sleep, air, shelter, and protection from danger.

A chance to be loved and to love.

An opportunity to be an independent person, but able to depend on others also.

A feeling of importance and value as an individual.

Freedom to explore, to grow, to learn, and to create.

When your child's emotional needs are met, he is contented and cooperative. He expresses his good feelings in his own way and brings pleasure to his family.

But when your child feels unimportant, perhaps because of a low grade in school, doesn't like what you are having for dinner, and gets scolded for not promptly setting the table, he may be very unhappy. The way he expresses his unhappiness will be his own way, too. He may be openly angry and generally naughty. Or he might feel sick, restless, sulky, or bored.

How does your child act when he is upset? What upsets him? What pleases him? How does he show his pleasure or his anger? These sound like simple questions, but the answers can be complicated. As you watch your child and listen to him, you may learn more about how he feels and how these feelings lead to his behavior. Since you want to guide his behavior in a way that is good for him and for others, you will want to understand the needs and the feelings that cause his actions.

Although you can't know all his emotions, you can get some clues to his own special way of feeling if you watch and

listen with an open mind and a warm heart. Other clues come from learning more about the principles of behavior.

**His special feelings are affected  
by his special inborn needs**

From studying behavior patterns, experts have found that a particular child may feel some of his basic needs more strongly than other children do. Or he may feel them less strongly. His inherited physical makeup has quite a bit to do with this.

Your child has his own special built-in abilities to feel, hear, see, smell, and taste. One youngster may find that carrots have a sickening taste; to another, carrots may be delicious. One youngster may hear the faint trill of a blackbird on the other side of a meadow; another seems to hardly notice the shattering wail of an ambulance siren. One screams with pain when he skins his knee; and another only seems mildly curious over the flow of blood.

Although your child has his unique built-in ways of feeling, he must learn to meet his needs in a socially acceptable way.

**Particular families shape particular children**

Parents are teachers even when they don't know it. Your child learns by imitating you. He may copy his mother's actions, his father's, or, most likely, he takes bits and pieces of both parents, adds a few fancy touches of his own, and spices the whole with dashes of brother, sister, grandmother, friend Susie, neighbor George, and other people who are special to him.

**His own way of learning**

As you teach your child the never-ending lessons of living, you find that he learns some of them better than others. He may be slow in learning to pick up his toys, but he is likely to discover, himself—and never forget—where the peanut butter is. He is apt to find bedmaking a mysteriously difficult art, but conquers roller skating with astonishing skill.

Naturally, a lot depends on how much he wants to learn a particular lesson. Wanting to learn, however, doesn't always

guarantee success. A lot depends on his individual abilities. Your child learned to walk and talk in his own special fashion—and in his own good time.

Your child has talents all his own, but he also has some limitations. These gifts and limits are somewhat a matter of his particular stage of growth. For instance, he might learn to read at age eight instead of age six, perhaps because of the way the nerves and muscles of his eyes are developing. He might struggle in vain to learn to skip at age six, but become an all-star skipper at age seven.

It is far too early to decide that he can achieve certain skills and not others. It is always too early for you to decide what he will make of his life. With your help and that of others, he will gradually find his own way as he grows.

What he needs now is your interest and belief in him as an individual. He needs a chance to explore, to experiment, to think, to talk, to look, to listen, to work, and to play. He needs a chance to study life in all these ways without being pushed too hard to succeed. He needs to feel you will love him whether he wins or loses. He needs to know you know he can't learn everything equally well.

### He paints a picture of himself

The ways in which he is like others and still like himself are partly a result of the picture he forms in his own mind. Your child, like others, carries around within him his own picture of himself. This self-picture is an important force that makes up his personality.

Bobby pictures himself as an especially naughty little boy. He half expects to be blamed for everything that goes wrong. He knows that he is smart and strong. He feels that he can do almost anything he tries. He is the first to climb and then jump off a high fence. He will fight with any kid who dares him. He is the champion stunt artist on his bike. He is wild and free—free of everything except the aching belief that no one really approves of him.

Ginny sees herself as a lovable nine-year-old girl who has both her good and bad points. She likes her curly hair and hates her freckles. She is proud and happy that she is a first-rate artist, yet gym throws her for a loss. Ginny thinks this is too bad, but not a disaster. She views herself as

someone who gets along pretty well with almost everybody. She believes she will be a success at many things and is eager to find out more about what she can and can't do. If she fails in one thing, she knows she'll get along all right in another.

What kind of an inner picture does your child have? It will, of course, be his own. It may or may not be quite what he really is. He has built it up, over the years, from many experiences. These include the way you feel about him and the way you treat him; the way other people feel about him and treat him; his failures and his successes.

His self-picture is by no means finished. It will change as he grows. This has both its advantages and disadvantages. Since your child tends to act according to his self-picture and since this picture changes through his experiences, the job of parenthood is, indeed, an especially challenging and exciting one.

Your child needs, for the most part, to have a pleasant picture of himself. It will help to give him courage and self-respect. This self-picture also needs to be true to what your child really is, true to what his world really is.

### **Your child grows up—a special child from a special family**

Perhaps only as you look back will you see how much your child's physical makeup, his needs and feelings, his special abilities and limits, his experiences in and away from home, and his developing self-picture have made him into the special young person that he is. You will be glad that those tender, worrisome, funny, exciting, and busy years of childhood didn't slip by without your making the most of being a special parent of a special child who is finding himself in an ever-enlarging world. For no matter how much he grows and how far he travels, he will always carry the meaning of home as a part of his special self.

## chapter 2

# YOUR SPECIAL CHILD AT A SPECIAL STAGE

Your youngster is a commuter to the wonderful, outside world of middle childhood. He travels back and forth between this outside world and the smaller, more personal one of your family. At age six, he makes short trips and comes home often. As he grows, his trips become longer and he checks in at the home station less often.

### Growing up takes time and practice

Your growing child has an increasingly strong urge to be independent. This is part of his long journey from being a helpless baby in your family to being the responsible parent of his own babies. He must grow from being dependent on you to being more dependent on himself, from being weak to being strong, from being frightened to being brave, from knowing little to knowing much, and being able to learn more.

You have your own confusing feelings to cope with as your child grows up. Although you are proud and happy in his growth, you sometimes think wistfully of your once-little child. As your youngster succeeds more and more in handling life on his own, you have to find ways of handling your life without his needing you quite so much.

### Fears are conquered slowly

As your child grows in self-confident independence, he will gradually conquer his fears. When he is six or seven, he is

likely to have imaginary terrors. There are many reasons for this. One of them is lack of knowledge and skill. He has a lot to learn about how to handle potentially dangerous realities—such as electrical appliances, automobiles, fire hazards, and so on.

There are other fears he has that are not real, but he thinks they are. Or could be. Such as the ghost in the closet, or the bear under the bed, or the dragon in his nightmares. Six- and seven-year-old children often have fears of this kind because they are overwhelmed by the feeling that they cannot be as good or strong or brave as they want to be, or perhaps as you expect them to be.

As your child gets older and grows in his self-confidence and skill, he is likely to have fewer imaginary terrors and to be less fearful, in general. The fears that he does have are apt to center on worries over school failure or lack of friends or of getting into trouble with other people.

Although you can't banish his fears, he is likely to find comfort in talking them over with you. It also helps if he learns, with your firm, calm guidance, to face some of them. Success in conquering small fears can build courage for coping with bigger ones. You may find that your daughter lets you know that she wants more help with fears than your son does. Girls in our society generally at least show their fears more than boys do.

### He likes to explore

As your child grows toward more independence and as he gradually overcomes his fears, his urge to adventure and explore also grows. His natural push is urged on by books, television programs, school lessons, companions, and so on.

Not all adventures take place near home. Especially as your child reaches nine and ten, he will want to range further and further in his explorations. Bike trips become more popular. He and his buddies may walk for miles in search of the magic that lies "around the next bend."

Boys are usually more adventuresome than girls. This is partly because they are expected to act in this way. It is also because they usually are allowed more freedom. It also may be related to their generally greater energy, stronger muscles, and physical restlessness.

### He wants to do what others do

Your youngster, as he gets older, will probably become more and more eager to be part of a group. He wants to be like his own agemates and liked by them. This is natural because people around his own age form much of the society into which he must fit now and later, as he grows up. From them he learns there are many ways to be a person.

### He wants to be a "real boy" and she, a "real girl"

Part of what he learns involves how to behave like a boy or a girl as the case may be. Your son learns about being a "little man" partly by loving and copying his father and other men he knows and admires. Your daughter grows toward becoming a woman partly by being close to her mother and other women.

But as your youngsters move on to age eight or nine, they usually get more and more involved in finding out what it means to be a boy or a girl in their own society. As they gather more information on this fascinating topic, they want to prove their own boy-ness or girl-ness.

This is especially true of boys. They and their friends gang up together to prove they belong to a man's world. They often overdo the act of being strong, tough, and fearless. Rough talk, a jaunty swagger, a disdain for comb and wash-cloth are viewed as passports to the male kingdom.

Even though your daughter probably won't feel so much pressure to prove she is a girl as your son will feel called upon to prove he is a male, she will be growing slowly toward being more feminine. Her big worries are more likely to come later when dating days begin.

### Their sex interest is changing

As your son and daughter grow toward more clear-cut masculine and feminine behavior, their interest in sex takes on a different slant. When they were younger, they probably were mostly concerned about where babies came from. Your son also grew to realize that some day he would be a man, and your daughter, a woman. But this seemed to be far in the future. Your child probably was very curious about how

people looked with nothing on and went through a stage when he seemed to have no sense of modesty.

Your youngster is apt to have come a long way in controlling interests such as these. He generally keeps his clothes on, asks fewer direct questions, and seems less curious about the human body. Your child's display of self-control may mislead you into thinking that he only has school and games on his mind.

Although these topics are very important to him, he hasn't forgotten the subject of sex. Especially as he reaches the age of nine or ten, he and his friends may discuss it a great deal among themselves. But they also discuss the importance of keeping some of the "facts of life" from adults.

While it is good for your growing child to have some areas of privacy and independence from you concerning his sex interests, this does not mean that the subject should be a closed one between you and him. Far from it. Ideally, you will have answered his questions about sex as they came up when he was younger. By the time he is six, you have probably given him some basic information about the physical differences between boys and girls, about how pregnancy occurs, how babies grow within a mother's body, and how, in general, they are born. If you have not already talked with him about these things, the experts agree that it is best for you to do so now.

They warn that children who do not learn about sex from their parents are likely to get many frightening and upsetting ideas from their friends, from misleading books and magazines, or from other sources. They also find that children who are free to talk about sex and matters related to it with their parents, when they are young, are far more likely to bring problems of this kind to their mothers and fathers when they are older.

Some parents hope to "protect their children from sex" by withholding information until their child reaches adolescence. Actually, this practice is apt to expose him to dangers rather than protect him. His natural physical growth urges him to want to know about himself and his world in its many aspects, including those related to sex. Also, today's children live in a society in which sex is emphasized. They see and hear about it on every side. Much of what they see and hear



gives them a false impression of excitement, glamour, and the purely physical aspects of this function.

The place of sex as one way of expressing married love and as the basis for creating new life is the healthy point of view that you as a parent can give your child both by what you say and by what you do. As you talk with your child about marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth, you may want to add that it is wise for parents to plan the size of their families and to space the birth of their children so that each child can be properly cared for as he grows up.

It is generally recommended that both parents answer their child's questions as he asks them and that they keep their answers simple and honest. Some children fail to ask questions. There can be many reasons for this. If your child has not asked for information, you can take the lead when the moment seems ripe. For instance, your youngster may comment that he would like to have a new baby brother or sister as a Christmas present, or he might observe that a neighbor, who is expecting a baby, has become very fat. If you are alert to your child's interests, he will probably give you cues of some kind as to questions he may have.

Especially as your child reaches the age of nine or ten, it is important to explain how boys and girls grow into adolescence. They should be prepared for these physical changes long before they occur.

These questions will come up over and over again. It takes a long time for children to understand such matters. Actually, it takes them a long time to understand many topics, but parents, finding sex-related subjects to be more difficult than some others—such as “what makes a clock run?”—are more likely to feel that the subject of sex comes up especially often.

Guiding your child toward a healthy, satisfying life as a boy or girl growing into manhood or womanhood is far more than a matter of giving sex information. It is also a matter of your child's total life as part of your family and of his larger world, first as a person, and second as a boy or as a girl. How you, as parents, feel about each other and behave toward each other as a married pair and how you feel about and behave toward your children as boys and as girls are part of this challenging process.

How and what to tell your child about sex can be a

complicated matter. There are a number of excellent pamphlets and books on this subject. Your library, church or temple, or school may have them available for loan.

### Concerns about sex play

Although your child probably is not quite so interested as he was earlier in playing games that include direct sex behavior and talk, interests of this sort are apt to continue. However, youngsters of this age usually are a bit more careful about what they do and where they do it. Even so, interests may continue for boys and girls to see and touch each other's nude bodies. Games such as "playing doctor" and "playing father and mother" are quite common.

Many parents get upset when their children act in this way. While you have your own values about such activities, it may help you to know that most experts on child behavior believe that sex interests of this kind are natural. It is a good idea to explain to your child that our social customs require boys and girls not to show their bodies to each other and not to touch each other's sex organs. But it is generally wise to avoid making your child feel as if he had done something extremely wrong or sinful if he behaves in this way. He will probably be less interested in such activities if you let him know that his behavior is natural, but that it should be controlled.

Answering any questions he may have will probably help, too. Moreover, if your child is sure of your love and approval of him as a person, he is more likely to want to control his behavior in this matter as well as others. One more point. Children who have plenty of interesting, satisfying activities at home and in the neighborhood are generally more apt to be less fascinated with sex play.

Most boys and many girls handle their own sex organs. Although many people believe this is wrong or dangerous, most of the specialists in child behavior do not agree with this point of view. They find that this activity generally hurts children only when undue attention is called to it and they are made to feel guilty about it.

Children usually have less desire to get pleasure from their own bodies when they feel sure of their parents' interest and affection, when they have been able to talk about sex at

home, when they have plenty of other interesting activities, and when they have a chance to make and keep friends.

Sometimes a child may become deeply upset by other problems in his life. He may express these upset feelings partly through a great deal of sex interest in words and behavior. In cases like this, it is often a good idea to talk the matter over with a child guidance expert.

### He plays—and plays—and plays

Your school-aged child is probably enthusiastic about more acceptable forms of play. He has a wonderful time racing around the neighborhood. He climbs, jumps, hops, skips, turns himself upside down and inside out. He wants to get places in a hurry and so he takes to scooters, wagons, bicycles and skates. He would fly if he could. Sometimes he feels as if this were possible, for his young energy fills him with a sense of soaring power and his rapidly developing bones and muscles give him new strength and skill.

As he plays, he practices and practices. Over and over again, he mounts his bike, rides a few wobbly feet, falls with a crash, rises from the wreckage and tries again. As he practices, he builds skills that are important to him now, and for the rest of his life. He develops nerves and muscles. He learns the many games that are a passport to the world of other children. He explores his talents and comes to accept some of his weaknesses. He plays by himself and with other youngsters. He plays in his own style because he is a special person, but he plays by the hour because he is a child.

Part of his play takes on a kind of magic ritual. He likes counting games. He likes to chant the same nonsense over and over. He likes to jump over the sidewalk cracks so as not to "break his mother's back." He enjoys counting the panes in a fence, white convertibles, blue trucks, and panes in the church window. Wishing on a star or a wishbone gives him a comforting sense of power.

Your child often works out bothersome feelings through his games. Feelings of fear, for instance, may be dealt with in imaginary games about ghosts and witches. Terrors of the unknown can be partly conquered when your child, in play, catches and "kills" the "wicked giant."

Youngsters at play frequently try out different ways of

being an adult. Perhaps your little girl clomps around in high heeled "lady shoes" busily at work feeding, bathing, dressing, and walking her "babies." And your son, studying his future career, may join a bevy of future breadwinners who run across the backyard, ardently engaged in being firemen, policemen, cowboys, and astronauts.

If your child is between the ages of six and eight, he probably plays quite informally. He and his friends are apt to like games without too many rules, making up their own as they go along. They may care very little about team spirit. Instead, they gather in small neighborhood clusters made up of both boys and girls. These clusters of friends are apt to change from day to day.

When your child reaches the age of nine or ten, however, he is apt to play in larger, more definite groups. He and his friends prefer games that have exact rules—rules which are handed on from one children's group to another. Belonging as he does to his own special world, your youngster cares very little about your ways of playing baseball, for instance. His ways are the ways of his gang—and he belongs to his own generation, not yours. And this is as it should be. Parents cannot relive their childhood through their children.

Your son is apt to be keener about team sports than your daughter. Being an expert athlete is probably important to him. He may welcome your coaching but he also will want the freedom to practice with his own age group. Most girls are a bit bored by the team approach to games and by the drive to be a sports expert. Society generally encourages them to tone down, rather than tone up, their muscles. Although girls do, and should, enjoy physical activity, they are apt to turn their attention to dancing, handicrafts, dramatics, and so on, particularly as they reach age ten or so.

**He wants rules and slowly learns to use them**

Six- to twelve-year-olds passionately insist on "justice." "It isn't fair" is a familiar complaint in many homes. When he is quite young, your child is apt to insist that a rule is a rule is a rule. No if's, and's, or but's about it, especially when the rule works in his favor. As he gets a bit older, he becomes somewhat less severe and can see that rules sometimes

change depending on people and events. When he gets still older, he begins to see that rules are tied to basic principles.

Six-year-old Johnny is outraged when he doesn't get his regular bedtime story and he likes the same one over and over again. It makes no difference to him that there is company for dinner and his parents are tied up taking care of their guests. "But, you said I could have a story every night and now you broke the rule," he sobs, in outrage. By age nine, the same Johnny can understand that the bedtime story depends a bit on how busy or tired his parents are when the moment arrives. (It helps, too, that he can read one himself.) By the time Johnny is eleven, he can understand that having a time to share his interests with his parents is the important thing. It no longer has to be a story or even a special visit at bedtime. He becomes willing to consider many shared experiences, such as a TV program, a game of checkers, carpentry with his father, and so on.

### His mind grows

As your child's mind grows and as he has more experiences, he will be able to understand more and more complicated ideas. He has a natural urge to learn—he wants to exercise his developing mind as well as his developing body. One reason that he talks so much, tells so many (to adults) silly jokes, and revels in riddles is that he is excited over learning to use words.

Words are vital to him. They are a basic link between him and other people. Ideas, feelings, and desires are expressed in words to a large extent. Much of a child's learning, in school and out, comes in word packages. His future job depends, in part, on how well he learns to use and understand them.

### His curiosity needs guidance

Your child learns in many ways besides talking and listening. He is full of curiosity. This can be both friend and enemy to him and to you. His curiosity leads him to take clocks, radios, and sewing machines apart; to attach a homemade parachute to the family cat and launch the poor creature from the second-story window; and to spread paint, paste, pins, and scraps of paper all over the living room.

As one father said, "It isn't children that I mind so much—it's what goes with them that will be the death of me." Six- to twelve-year-olds can be pretty overwhelming as their curiosity calls them from one experiment to the next. They need limits put on their boundless enthusiasm for seeing, making, and doing. But they also need opportunities for self-expression.

Curiosity can often be channeled into constructive hobbies. Your youngster probably is a devoted hobbyist. His room may bulge with the deserted loves of yesterday and the ambitious plans for today and tomorrow. The guppy-raising project now has only a cracked fish bowl as a monument to that phase. It is filled with horse chestnuts that no longer gleam, broken crayons, old playing cards, and an ancient teddy bear clearly in need of surgery. The bow and arrow that he couldn't live without now is limp and deserted. The blocks that have been airports, apartment houses, stables, railway terminals, and the North Pole are neglected bits of wood.

But not all is ruin. On his desk is the latest passion—the new stamp album with bits of pink, green, yellow, and blue lovingly mounted in the correct places. Here is the match book collection, neatly arranged by type—birds, restaurants, hotels, and flowers.

Stay your hand. Don't clean up a thing without the help of your young hobbyist. Everything you see, including yesterday's clutter, has meaning to him. Your child has evolved out of this confusing maze. Gradually he has found out a good deal about himself—what he can do and what he can't; what interests him and what doesn't.

As you close the door to his room, maybe you notice, for the first time, the sign "Private. Keep out. This means everyone over 12 and under 9." This means his brothers and sisters, his mother and father.

Why does he want to be so private? Mostly because he is growing up. Your school-aged child is working hard at building up his separate sense of self.

### He wants to be a separate individual

His passion for privacy was, perhaps, only a small spark at age six when he was still largely dependent on you. But the

spark becomes a steady flame by the time he is nine or ten and it provides considerable heat during the years to follow. His passion to be himself is revealed, too, by his collections and personal belongings. They help to add up to his sense of "me and mine."

Your child probably insists on having a pet. One of the reasons for this demand may be that having an animal of his own adds to his sense of power as a separate individual. As your child seeks to be less of a baby who takes love and more of an individual who gives love, he reaches out to animals as objects of his affection. One seven-year-old, when offered a goldfish instead of a puppy, mourned, "But I simply have to have something I can hold on my lap and love."

### He is proud of being a good worker

Another way your child shows he is a person is through his work projects. Your school-aged youngster has the chance of his lifetime to be intensely occupied with learning and doing. He has gained the basic skills for taking care of himself and he can get along without the constant attention of his parents. If he makes a mistake in his learning and doing, it generally makes little difference. He isn't playing "for keeps" yet, so he can write off most of his errors and start again.

Sometimes his ambitions outrun his abilities. It is good for him to have failures if he can overcome most of them and learn how to do better the next time. Or how to give up when he is trying to do something that is too hard. Too many defeats are not good for him. They may make him feel like an all-around failure. Children vary in how many stumbling blocks they can put up with. You will have to judge for yourself how much help your child needs in meeting the problems that are sure to come his way.

### He grows in self-control

Your growing child learns in many ways to control his feelings. He not only "hangs on to his mads" (as one child put it) better than he used to, but he also becomes more generous and cooperative. When he was tiny, he had just one thing on his mind, himself. As he gets older he grows in his ability to give, as well as take, love. He can put off getting

what he wants for quite a period of time, such as waiting until his birthday for the box of paints. Sometimes he can even settle for not getting everything he wants.

Your growing child won't be self-controlled all of the time. Children vary in how much they can think of others rather than themselves. A good deal depends on their experiences, their natural ways of feeling, and their state of health. When your child doesn't feel very well or is upset about something, he is apt to act less grownup than at other times. It is natural for him to move forward and backward in the way he handles his feelings.

### **It isn't always easy to be good**

Your child still goes back and forth, too, in his understanding of right and wrong. As he explores the many parts of his larger world, he finds out that some people lie, cheat, and steal. And he may be tempted to do likewise. He finds out there is prejudice and he wonders about this. He learns new words that have the effect of dynamite when he casually drops them at home. He learns there are many ways of thinking about God and the purposes of life. Parents are given plenty to think about as their growing child asks questions about his many new experiences.

Your standards have probably become a part of him. He can hear them inside himself even when you aren't there. They have become his conscience. Now that he is six or seven, you can trust him more than you could earlier.

Temptation, however, sometimes speaks louder than his conscience. He will need your loving guidance and firm discipline for a number of years before he can "go it alone."

### **His body grows slowly**

Your child's physical growth is apt to be slow but fairly steady from age six to age ten or eleven. Probably this slow physical growth is his special friend—it gives him a chance to "spread himself" in interests, skills, and knowledge without being hampered by the exhausting physical changes which come with preadolescence and adolescence.

Growth is a continuous thing. It's not marked off definitely so that we can say, "Now, it's time for this to happen," or



"That's over and done with." Few things about growth are as decisive as getting one's full set of teeth, and even those few aren't reached at certain exact times. Growth is uneven, too. Children don't grow at the same pace mentally, physically, socially or emotionally. Each has his or her own way of growing that's not quite like anyone else's.

As if individual growth differences between boys' and girls' growth weren't confusing enough, progress sometimes comes in leaps and bounds. This is most noticeable in height. After a period of slow growth, a child amazes himself and us by growing several inches in a single year, perhaps. But by and large, it's the progress toward adulthood that can't be seen and measured in inches or pounds or growth of vocabulary that is surprising and mysterious. This growth often shows up in flashes. A boy reveals the stuff he is made of by standing up for a friend under hard conditions. When her mother falls sick, a girl takes over responsibilities no one guessed she was capable of carrying. By voluntarily shining his shoes a boy lets us into the secret of his awakening interest in girls; as a girl shows her interest in boys by coming down to breakfast with lipstick on.

Your child will grow at his own rate, although he will follow a general pattern. How much and how fast he grows depends on his inheritance, his nutrition, and his physical and emotional health. Girls generally are six months to several years ahead of boys in their physical development. If your child is healthy and making progress, it probably doesn't make much difference whether he is a fast, slow, or average grower.

His health is not determined by his size. Some youngsters are naturally tall and slender, some short and chubby, and others square and muscular. Since each child has his own natural body build, it is important to consider your child's size in terms of his natural physical style. Your doctor can tell you whether he is growing as he should, especially if he has records of your youngster's height and weight gain over a period of years.

### His appearance and physical abilities change

Your six- to twelve-year-old child still has fairly soft bones and a flexible skeletal system. This is one reason that

he can practically tie himself into knots. Because his bones are growing, they can be misshapen by shoes and socks that do not fit correctly, by poor mattresses, and bedding that is too heavy.

Your child's muscles are also growing at this time. He grows in his ability to move more quickly and accurately. As he gets past six or so, he can more readily move one part of his body at a time without throwing his whole self into the act. He also becomes stronger and can go for longer periods without rest. Good food, enough sleep, and plenty of exercise will help your youngster's muscular growth.

Your child's ability to see clearly and accurately will probably continue to improve until he is seven or eight. Your six-year-old's eye movements may be slow and it is likely that he will have trouble seeing small print. This is apt to be truer of boys than of girls. Early reading problems are sometimes related to the fact that a child's vision is not yet fully developed. These problems may disappear when he is a little older and his vision has matured.

You will want to take your child to the dentist at least twice a year in order to know whether his teeth are in good condition and whether they are growing correctly. Early correction of dental problems is important to his present and future health and appearance.

Your child will probably be in flourishing general health during these middle years of childhood. Although he still needs good physical care, he is apt to have greater resistance to illnesses than was true at an earlier date. Colds and common contagious diseases may come his way especially in his first few years in school. But if immunizations are kept up to date and his general health is good, these illnesses are not likely to be serious. You should check with your doctor and follow his instructions.

If your child has a physical handicap, you will want to have it attended to early in his life.

Also, vision and hearing tests should be repeated every year or so, or oftener if it seems that your child may have problems along this line. Many physical problems can be cured or made less burdensome if a youngster gets skilled medical care when he is young.

**Preadolescence: a special stage**

If your child is ten, or older, you may find that he has outgrown many of the childlike qualities that have been described. This may be especially true of your daughter, for girls generally grow into adolescence somewhat earlier than boys do.

Your child moves gradually into puberty: the onset of menstruation in girls and of seminal emissions (commonly called wet dreams) in boys. Before these events occur, glandular changes take place in a child's body which gradually prepare him (or her) for adolescence. These changes usually bring about a certain amount of strain, as well as pride and pleasure for both you and your child.

How your child reacts to this stage depends a good deal on what kind of a person he is already and on the kind of understanding you give him during these years. As your own understanding grows, it is a good idea to share much of your knowledge with your child because most boys and girls are a bit puzzled and worried by the changes in themselves at this stage in their development.

**Your daughter's growth toward puberty**

Girls who are well nourished and in good physical condition, whose homes and living conditions are above average, tend to mature somewhat earlier than those in less favorable surroundings. Also, a moderate climate favors earlier maturation than either a very hot or a very cold climate.

The largest number of girls first menstruate when thirteen, although a good many do so at twelve. An occasional girl has her first menstrual period as early as nine or ten. Very few girls begin to menstruate more than two years before or five years after the average age of thirteen. It is a rare girl who has not menstruated by the time she is sixteen. However, there is nothing abnormal in such comparatively late maturation, or in its early arrival at ten or eleven. About 3 percent of girls begin to menstruate before eleven, and another 3 percent after fifteen.

In addition to the appearance of menstruation, related, or secondary, sex characteristics show up. Among them are the development of the breasts, and a gradual rounding of the

figure into curves that mark departure from little-girlhood. Along with these is rapid growth of the sex organs—the vagina, uterus, fallopian tubes and the ovaries that will produce eggs throughout the child-bearing years.

About three years before menstruation, your daughter starts to grow faster. About a year before menstruation, she is apt to add several inches in height, develop feminine curves, and begin to grow pubic hair.

If you have not already explained menstruation to her, you will surely want to do so during her preadolescence. It is important to answer honestly any questions that she may have about her own growth and that of a boy's. Her feelings about her own growth and her interest in boys are just as important as are the basic facts.

### **Your son's growth**

In the boy outward bodily changes, such as the appearance of facial and pubic hair, are usually relied on to mark his passage into adolescence. The largest group of boys can be expected to reach puberty at about fourteen or fifteen, which is a year or two earlier than would have been the case fifty years ago. They will have begun their spurt in height about six months earlier than their pubescent gain in weight.

It is important to explain to him, in advance, that he will have seminal emissions (wet dreams) and that they are a natural result of the development and accumulation of sperm and seminal fluid in his body. As in the case of your daughter, your son should learn from his parents about his own growth and the growth of girls.

### **Emotional changes**

As these gradual changes take place in your child's body, he may become more moody, restless, and rebellious. He is also apt to develop strong interests in the opposite sex and in his own appearance. This is partly because of many changes within his body, partly because of his feelings about them, and partly because of the kind of society we live in. Most young people at this time feel unsure of themselves. They feel too old for the pleasures of childhood and too young to

belong to the society of teen-agers, whom they so much admire.

Your preadolescent may be something like twelve-year-old Majorie, who appeared dressed for the school dance with her slip showing. When her mother pointed this out, she responded "Yes, I know. I did it on purpose. It gives me something to worry about that I can fix."

Your preadolescent is apt to move backward and forward between being very independent and self-confident at one moment, and astonishingly childish the next. It is likely to help if you take these rapid shifts in behavior as calmly as possible with the understanding that he will become much steadier in time. It helps, too, if you realize that he is probably trying very hard to be a mature young person, but simply can't play the part all the time. If you show that you believe in him, he is far more apt to believe in himself.

## chapter 3

# YOUR SIX- TO TWELVE-YEAR-OLD CHILD AT HOME

**Many parts make up the whole family**

Family life is like a delicate balancing act. A lot of personalities have to be considered at once—the special interests and feelings of husband and wife, children, relatives, neighbors, and people in the larger community.

At the same time, you have to tend to practical matters too, like the family budget, mealtimes, bedtimes, school- and work-times.

What it all adds up to is that everyone in the family has his own special needs, interests, rights, duties, and wishes. Each individual must somehow be in balance with every other one, and the total family must fit into the larger world of other families, schools, businesses, churches, and so on.

**Each family member counts**

It takes many kinds of parental abilities and much knowledge to bring about a certain amount of family harmony. Your family gives you and your youngsters a sense of counting for something. Each of you—mother, father, son, and daughter—thrives on the knowledge that who you are and what you are do make a tremendous difference to others in the family. Although you are a tiny part of a crowded world, each of you is a vital performer in your own home.

This sense of belonging is good for you and for your youngsters. Although you and they probably belong to many groups, it is likely that none of you are completely sure that

you are a permanent member of any close group except your family.

Although your school-aged child is less a family believer than he used to be, he still needs family life very much. Because he is young, he has less inner strength to shield him against loneliness. If he feels that he belongs to his family, he will have a source of inner strength no matter what happens.

Belonging to his family also gives your child a chance to practice membership skills. He learns how to share, to take turns, to be loyal, and to adjust to the feelings of other people. These lessons help him when he moves into groups outside his home.

### Feelings are strong in families

Close personal relationships are part of the joy of family life. You and your spouse need this intimate sharing. Your sons and daughters also need the give and take of sharing feelings, experiences, and ideas with each other and with you, their father and mother.

Close family relationships give every family member an important outlet for his feelings. Good feelings are more joyous and bad feelings less depressing when you can freely express them to someone who cares. Anger drains away when you have a chance to "blow your stack" to someone who can understand and sympathize. Successes are more triumphant when they are brought home. Failures are more bearable when you know that your family still loves and believes in you.

This personal closeness is not, of course, all sympathy and understanding. There are plenty of ups and downs in any family. Closeness brings conflicts, as well as comfort. Love brings hurt, as well as healed, feelings. Because family members care so much, they can upset, as well as soothe, one another. And because all human beings become angry when they get hurt, family life is apt to contain plenty of tears, temper, wounded silences, heated quarrels, and gloomy thoughts of revenge. Such upsets are apt to be more common for children than for parents because it takes years of living to learn self-control. And few, if any, adults ever achieve this completely.

Another reason your family is apt to be an emotional

storm center is that children and parents, alike, are expected to hold in their feelings when they deal with the outer world. These feelings build up during the day and, like dammed waters, must have an outlet. If family members can pour out their feelings at home, they probably can be more calmly reasonable at school, work, and play.

Maybe you can't smooth your child's ruffled feelings, no matter how you try. Perhaps your spouse it better at calming Johnny than you are; or more successful with Marjorie. Sometimes one parent gets along especially well with one of the children and the other parent with the other youngster.

### **It takes all kinds to make a family**

There are a number of reasons for this. One of them is husbands and wives are likely to have different personality traits.

Differences between a husband and wife can help to make a well-balanced family, even though they can create trouble. If each partner has the same strengths and weaknesses, there often may be trouble.

Since most husbands and wives have different personality traits, their children are apt to show the same differences—and add a few of their own. Thus, Bill might see eye-to-eye with his mother on most issues while Joan may side with her father.

These differences between fathers and mothers, sons and daughters can make for a strong family team. They can also make for some strong family arguments. They create the possibility of a balanced family—but make the balancing act extremely complicated.

It is easier to stand the out-of-balance moments if you bear in mind that differences in your family are good and necessary in the long run. Of course, they can be pretty upsetting at times.

It also helps to bear in mind that most personality traits have two sides, a good and a bad one and you have to take the bad to get the good. A breezy, happy-go-lucky father might forget to pay some of the bills and he might leave the snow tires on the car until August. But, easy-going dads like this are usually good fun, rarely lose their tempers, and can often be counted on to be generous.



Different kinds of parents not only help balance family life, they also help children see that there are many different ways of being a fine person. However, if family differences pile up into long-standing family quarrels, home can be a place for despair instead of repair.

### Free family discussions help

Family repairs can generally be promoted by "talking things over." One of the chief values of family life is that it provides a place where ideas and feelings can be discussed openly. Many husbands and wives find it helpful to talk together when the children are asleep or away from home. If husbands and wives can talk over the annoyances, worries, and problems of the day with each other, they may find relief from bothersome feelings. They may also feel close to each other and grateful for this closeness—a closeness that includes children as well as parents.

Some of the day's troubles relate directly to how each has acted toward the other or toward the children. Talking about these problems is not so easy. Feelings often get hurt. Pet ideas may be attacked. Angry words may be spoken. But often, after differences have been faced and complaints are out in the open, husband and wife can plan together on how to tackle a problem as a team.

Family discussion certainly doesn't have to be centered on miseries. Far from it! There are plenty of good things to talk about, including what each person has done well and how much you care for each other. Expressed pride and affection does wonders. The practice of often telling each member of your family something nice about himself, perhaps as they set off for work or school, is like clothing each of them in an invisible lifejacket. And the wonderful thing is that you may collect in return a whole set of lifejackets for yourself, like David's offer to shovel the snow off the walk or Patsy's home-from-school present of a bunch of droopy dandelions.

### You grow stronger by being a parent

Not for nothing do you dry up tears, find the raincoats, harbor a weird array of bothersome pets, listen to woes, earn and dole out money, create lily and tiger costumes, visit

Santa Claus, and settle youthful battles. As you accept the differences among family members, understand their feelings and desires, and respond to the daily trials and triumphs, you find your own character growing sturdier. As one father remarked, "I don't know how anyone learns to be an adult without children to teach him."

## chapter 4

# PARENTS AS FAMILY LEADERS

Your six- to twelve-year-old models himself after both of his parents and looks to them for inspiration, advice, and help in self-control. As a mother and father, you have the right and privilege of being the leaders of your family. Both of you are wise, older, and more experienced than your children. Both of you are of equal importance, although one may be a better leader in some cases than the other. When fathers and mothers share leadership, families are more likely to gain a better balance.

Of course, your leadership will work a lot better for you and your youngsters if you go about it with a bit of skill. The most successful leaders promote discipline without being bossy. They suggest, rather than demand. When they say "no" they mean it, but they say it calmly. They are reasonable and fair. They take into account the special strengths and weaknesses of their followers. They respect the rights of each individual and make allowances for special circumstances. They give praise for work well done. Their punishments are sure, but mild. They set a good example. They are willing to do the same things that they ask others to do. They give clear direction.

### Different kinds of leadership for different kinds of children

If your child is a rather gentle, shy person, he might "hop to it" under the force of a harsh scolding, but he will probably go about his tasks in a half-hearted, resentful way. He will keep his unhappy feelings to himself and brood

silently about how to find ways of doing what he wants without your knowing about it.

When you push a timid child around, you may push his small, inner self into a dark lonely closet of worry, shame, and fear. He will hide from you and you will know only the part of him that he dares to let you see.

On the other hand, if your child has a "firecracker" response to commands, he is likely to resist direct orders every inch of the way. No brooding silence and outward obedience from him. He is a fighter who needs a firm but gentle hand. You might be able to control him with your greater strength and size when he is young, but the time is coming when he will be as strong and as big as you are. When this happens, your small firecracker may become a cannon—and his explosions will be dangerous to you, to him, and to other people.

So, whether your child is the easily led (but secretly resentful) type, or the "won't give an inch" rebellious kind, you aren't likely to get far by criticism and commands. Although you often have good reasons to want to handle your youngsters with an "I'm right, you're wrong" approach, in the long run you will be wrong instead of right.

Although such "bossy" leadership can get momentary results in many cases, bringing up children is hardly a matter of moments. You have long-range goals for your youngsters. Patience and tact now bring big rewards in the future.

Truly successful methods of guiding your child are based on your deep feeling and understanding of him. These methods are rooted in your love and respect for your youngster and in your conviction that he must have both freedom and guides for growth.

### **Parents can't be perfect**

As a parent and a family leader, you are human. At times, you may lose your temper and say and do many unwise things. Even though you may know you are being anything but a model parent, you can be swept away by your own feelings of anger or despair. Maybe you are tired or ill, or extremely worried. Sometimes "everything is just too much." All is not lost if you lose your self-control now and then.

Your children can forgive and forget your slips, if they

don't happen too often. It is very possible that your child may benefit from a few parental mistakes. Children can find it mighty discouraging to have a perfect mother or father.

Your six- to twelve-year-old child can be a real help to you on your "not-too-often" offdays. He is old enough to understand some of the pressures that bother you. As time goes by, your youngster should develop enough self-control to understand and to consider your situation as well as his own.

But it is dangerous to pile too many burdens on him. Much of his self-confidence still depends on believing in your strength. He still needs you as a leader who is self-disciplined and who can help him discipline himself.

### Discipline designed to fit your child

Some youngsters are easier to discipline and guide than others. This depends partly on what kind of a person your child is. It sometimes depends on whether you have a son or daughter. Boys generally tend to be somewhat more rebellious than girls. It also depends on the age of your child. Six- and seven-year-olds are still quite dependent on their parents and are likely to believe that mothers and fathers are (mostly) right.

As your child gets older, he may question your discipline more often. This is largely because he is encountering different customs outside his home, and also because he wants to prove his independence from his parents.

The whole matter of discipline can get pretty wearing at times. Some parents, discouraged by struggling with their children, are tempted to surrender to them. Other parents underplay discipline because they believe that children thrive on self-expression. And some, unsure of what they think, find it hard to take a stand and hold to it.

Despite the effort, good discipline does pay excellent returns. Children do need to express themselves but they also need to have limits on this freedom. Husbands and wives need to establish family rules together, to discuss these rules with their youngsters, and to be prepared to stand by them.

Children who are given almost complete freedom to be themselves often grow up to be gay, charming, creative, friendly people. But they may also become irresponsible, lazy, and self-centered. This is usually as hard on them as it is

on other people, partly because they will find themselves disliked and unwanted in most groups. On the other hand, youngsters who are cramped by too many rules and too much pressure for hard work may grow up to be dull, timid, and afraid to think for themselves. Or they may rebel and 'run wild.'

### **Discipline requires rules**

Your child requires a middle-of-the-road approach in this matter of discipline. Some rules are good but not too many of them. You can hold him to important ones.

Children like to know the reasons for rules. They like to discuss the pros and cons and to have a part in making them. You may find that your youngster makes some excellent rules when you give him a chance to suggest them. Although you have the final say, you will find it helpful to talk over practical matters of family do's and don'ts with your youngsters.

As they get older, children grow out of some rules and into others. All kinds of daily details change with your changing child. He continues to need limits, but these limits need to be adjusted to his growing skills and interests.

### **Punishment is sometimes, but not always, necessary**

There will be times when your child steps off limits. This calls for some kind of action on your part. Before you punish him, however, you will want to find out why he did something wrong. Some children are disobedient through ignorance. If your child misbehaves through ignorance, you will want to explain to him where he went wrong and help him make up for his misdeed.

Children are sometimes disobedient because temptation is simply too much for them. There is the lure of the nearby creek when, in early spring, the weather seems to jump into midsummer. There is the box of unguarded chocolate candy shouting "Eat me" from the center of the kitchen table. Of course, your child shouldn't give in to these temptations. Perhaps explaining to him again, a little more firmly than the last time, why he shouldn't swim in the creek ("Because you might catch a bad cold and then you won't be able to play

baseball") or eating chocolate ("After your supper, you can have two pieces") may be just what your child needs. If he persists in this misbehavior, then stronger methods of punishment may be warranted. The important thing is to punish your child with understanding as well as with justice.

Some children are particularly naughty when they don't feel well or when they are upset about a secret fear or worry. If your generally well-behaved child suddenly "goes off the track," you might check as to the state of his health or the state of his feelings. Poor appetite, restlessness, whining, and fatigue may suggest a physical problem. In this case, perhaps he should see a doctor.

Perhaps you can get at inner fears or worries that can cause bad behavior by gently suggesting to your child that he talk to you about what is bothering him. Sometimes you might think over what has recently changed in his life. One six-year-old boy became very naughty after his grandmother came to live with the family. She was given his room, and he was rather hastily moved in with his sister. His behavior straightened out after he freely expressed his resentment and his parents gave him more space for his things.

Some children are upset over a change of teachers, or by moving from one neighborhood to another. If parents are sympathetic and a little easygoing for a while, the child often gets used to the changes and settles down. A youngster sometimes suffers from a sense of shame over a secret wrongdoing (such as taking money from his father's wallet). He may worry about what he has done. His worry can lead to more misbehavior. Or feeling guilty, he might do something wrong hoping to get caught because he feels he ought to be punished.

If you can find out what is bothering your youngster and treat the cause of his naughtiness, this is likely to be better than punishment when your child misbehaves because he is troubled. At times, though, your child misbehaves because his naturally eager desire to be doing something is hard to contain. He wants to do what he wants to do, and he wants to do it regardless. What he wants to do may cause so much trouble that his activities have to be limited. When you do apply these limits, it is best to do this right after he misbehaves. This helps to connect, in his mind, why what he is doing is the wrong thing to do.

Mild punishment is better than severe. Some children can be checked by a sharp look or a few firm words. Children are angered by such extreme measures as hard spanking. It is best never to hit a child or hurt him physically. If this happens, children are apt to feel as if they have been treated unfairly and without love. Also, they can be so upset by harsh punishment that they fail to understand why they are being disciplined. Severe punishment brings with it severely upset emotions—and these get in the way of learning and thinking.

Punishment that fits the misdeed is likely to help your child learn his lesson more clearly. For instance, Sally, who put red house paint on the steps, can be told to scrub them with turpentine.

Punishments should be short and simple, especially when your child is young. They should be in keeping with his size and understanding as well as with his personality.

Punishments also should be something you can manage. In the heat of your dismay over your child's behavior, you might, for instance, rule that he can't play with his best friend for week. That week can get dreadfully long and you might want to give in before it's over.

If you say "no" to your child, it is almost always a mistake to change your mind. He learns fast that sometimes you don't really mean what you say, and so he pays no attention to your threats. Therefore, before you try to control your youngster, think again and be sure you are ready, willing, and able to follow through on what you say you will do.

Frequent punishments lose their effect. Children seem to build up a "don't care" attitude if they are scolded over and over again. Some come to believe that they will always be in trouble with their parents and so they might just as well act as they please, take their punishment, and continue misbehaving.

### **Discipline is more than punishment**

Punishment is far from being the total discipline story. Discipline for your child includes the fact that, by word and deed, you set standards for him. He takes your standards for his own more through love and admiration for you than through punishment. As he works, plays, and talks with you,



he "soaks up" your knowledge, skills, beliefs, and interests—your standards.

If you reward his good behavior as well as correct his mistakes, he is particularly apt to want to behave well and to remember how he should behave. Rewards don't need to take the form of presents, treats, or money. Praise, a loving word or hug, a warm "thank you" can mean more than money or gifts.

### **Brothers and sisters: friends and foes**

The whole matter of family leadership and discipline becomes at once harder and easier when you have several youngsters in your family—harder, because each has his special personality, stage of growth, particular demands and interests; harder, too, because most brothers and sisters compete with each other at least some of the time. When you give special attention to one, the other may feel left out. "You love her more than you do me," "It's his turn to set the table, not mine," "If he's going to stay up late, I am too," are familiar words in many families.

But how about the easy part? Brothers and sisters have a lot of fun together. They also teach each other many important lessons. Older children can set good examples for the younger ones. The younger child helps his big brother or sister to feel wise, strong, and important when he looks to them for wisdom and strength. They can even teach each other lessons when they are fighting. It helps your children to learn how to argue, to defend themselves, to stand up for their own rights, and to make peace.

Peace may become quite an issue in some families. Brother-sister quarreling sometimes becomes unbearable. Some of it can be borne more easily if you realize that often your youngsters are competing for your attention. Each wants to be your adored child. Therefore, quarreling can often be cut down by showing and telling each of your youngsters how much you love him.

Then, too, your children may be fighting mostly because they are hungry, or tired, or just because living together and sharing a home often means giving up something they want for themselves. Food and rest at the right moment can help. Also, quarreling can often be reduced by encouraging your

children to talk about what angers them. This, at least, gets matters out of the punching, pinching, and hitting stage.

However, talk can go too far. Angry words occasionally build up into a traffic jam of insult-trading. One way to break up the jam is to get each youngster off the "center" and set him speeding along his own road. Such as "Johnny, you go outdoors and ride your bike. Janie, you go in the living room and paint me a picture. Judy, I can see you are tired, I want you to take a nap. And here are two cookies for each of you."

Separating brothers and sisters for a while cools down heated feelings. Letting restless ones have a chance to blow off steam through exercise or creative activity drains off tensions. Giving food restores energy and a sense of being loved. Putting tired youngsters to bed helps them to feel less cross. Just what directions you give each of your children depends, of course, on what you have found works for each and what is causing each to behave as he does.

If you can manage to be fair, firm, and calm as you settle family bickering, your youngsters will appreciate it. They set great store by justice. They like a sense of order and control. They want you to save them from being too free with their anger and jealousy.

To this end, some families have a system of rules, work assignments, regular treats, and so on. Some families make charts, after discussion with the children, so that each youngster knows exactly what his jobs are for each day. In this way, arguments are cut down as to "Whose turn is it?"

Of course, systems can be overdone. They tend to work best when they can be changed for special reasons.

### **Different feelings for different children**

Even though you do your best to promote good feeling in your family, one or more of your children might accuse you of playing favorites.

It might be worth your while to think this over. Maybe, without realizing it, you do show more favor to one child than to another. You might have especially high standards for one because he is so much like you. Perhaps you understand him best, but perhaps you also get particularly cross with him when he shows traits that you have—and wish you

didn't—like a hot temper, for instance, or a tendency toward shyness or carelessness. It may well be that you are more severe with this child than you really ought to be.

Or you may have a special sympathy for one of your youngsters. If you were once a middle child, for example, you may be unusually kind to your own in-between. You might, without realizing it, be paying off your own big sister and little brother of years ago by favoring your middle ones. Naturally, you don't mean to do this. If you find yourself truly favoring or overblaming one of your children more than the others, you can sometimes correct yourself by facing this fact and searching for the reasons. This doesn't always work, because none of us can hope to understand and control all of our feelings and actions. If you realize you have made a mistake like this, it might also be a good idea to tell your child and, at the same time, try to mend your ways.

### **Mothers and fathers are important**

Husbands and wives often help each other in this matter. A father might more easily see how a mother behaves toward the children than she can, herself. And vice versa. However, husbands and wives don't always agree on what they see. In fact, they sometimes get pretty critical about each other's fathering and mothering.

Fathers and mothers are apt to go about the job of "parenting" somewhat differently. One reason for this is that they are usually different kinds of people to begin with. Another reason is that men and women, like boys and girls, are likely to approach life differently. They might do this naturally, but they have also been taught that fathers should act in a certain way and mothers, in another.

Fathers generally have higher goals for their children. They are often more concerned about how well the youngsters do in school. They may expect more work and independence of their sons and daughters; especially their sons. A father is likely to feel a special bond with his son. He also wants him to be a success in "a man's world."

If a father sets high goals for his son but, at the same time, gives him love without too much pressure, he will be of immense help to his boy. It is important for a boy in his middle years to have a father who understands and is willing

to give him a steady hand up the long hill to manhood.

Girls also get special benefits from fathers. Among other things, their fathers can teach them how to love and get along with men. Then, too, if a father shows pride in his daughter as an individual and as a girl, this promotes her feminine self-confidence and self-respect.

Some children are not blessed with fathers. When this is true, a male relative, neighbor, teacher, minister, or club leader can be of special help to them.

The reason Dad's part in family life is stressed here is that he is sometimes overlooked as being necessary to his family in matters other than earning a living. Husbands and wives really need each other as partners in family leadership and children need the companionship and guidance of both parents. The family circle is in for rough times if husbands and wives see their life together as a game which one person must win and the other must lose. Or a debate in which one side is right and the other wrong. This family circle will be smoother when husband and wife think of themselves as balancing each other as a pair of leaders, each with his different ideas, gifts, goals, and interests.

## chapter 5

# FAMILY GOOD TIMES

Your family circle can roll along at a fine, joyous clip if you oil it with plenty of good times. Although you probably have your own likes and dislikes along this line, some suggestions may be welcome.

Most youngsters, six to twelve, thoroughly enjoy taking trips. Your outing can be fun even if it isn't fancy or far from home. Preplanning is likely to improve the family jaunt.

You have doubtless discovered that it is a good idea to discuss outings with all members of the family. Of course, this may produce a heated argument. Three-year-old Barbara wants a place to wade. Six-year-old Jack wants to explore caves. Nine-year-old Sammy would like to climb mountains. Father dreams of a fishing trip. And mother may be secretly pining for a chance to go shopping for summer sales.

Clearly, one outing will not satisfy these different goals. Perhaps, wading, fishing, and cave-ing can go into this trip, while mother and Sammy wait their turn for mountains and shopping centers.

Since everyone cannot be satisfied at once, husbands and wives, as family leaders, will have to make the final decision.

It is quite likely that you are already a veteran trip-taker. You have probably found out that family journeys need to be short and simple; that plenty of food adds the light touch to difficult moments; that even on the hottest days taking along a sweater for everyone may be indicated; that someone is bound to fall into a creek and will need a change of clothes. The trip had better be budgeted ahead of time, too. If everyone knows in advance how much money can be spent on the outing, pleas for "extras" are less frequent. Also, it is

wise to remind your children of some basic rules of trip behavior before you start; such as how to behave in public, how much time the outing is likely to take, and how to be safe and still have fun.

Chances are that your child's trip behavior is apt to be better outdoors than indoors. If you don't live in or near open country, you may be lucky enough to have a good park not too far from your home.

Although careful planning helps, a 100 percent perfect family outing is just about impossible. A few minor crises are bound to occur. This is a normal part of family-centered fun. If your outing has some nice high points, the low ones can be overlooked—especially after you are all safely home again.

Although your six- to twelve-year-old is apt to particularly enjoy outdoor trips and they may be the easiest kind for your whole family, you wouldn't want to limit yourself to nature jaunts.

Your children will enjoy and profit from many other kinds of family expeditions; for instance, trips to such places as stores, factories, railroad stations and trains, the firehouse, banks, restaurants, the court house, and so on. Excursions like these are popular with most youngsters. And teachers find that boys and girls who have been to many kinds of places usually are better students.

Your children, quite obviously, will also benefit from trips to museums, libraries, concerts, and theaters. This is particularly true if you choose events that are especially planned for children and if you let them have a part in choosing what they want to see and do.

Seeing and doing with your children can provide you with some pleasant surprises and joyous memories. As you introduce your child to the world, keep your ears open for some delightful childish reactions. For instance, your child might think yellow autumn leaves drifting to the ground look "just like fall butterflies." And, at a symphony concert, "Those trumpets look like morning glories."

### Good times at home

About this time, you may be thinking that families with six- to twelve-year-olds can also have fun at home. Popular activities usually include your child's drive to make things, to

develop new skills, to have hobbies, and to feel close to family members.

Some families read aloud together. There are books, short stories, and poems that appeal to persons of almost any age. You might also ask your librarian for suggestions. Along with the enjoyment that families can find in sharing a good book goes the extra dividend that "read to" youngsters are likely to become good readers.

Then there is family music. It isn't always much to listen to, but it is usually great for performers.

Not all special event or family activities need to include everyone. It is a good idea for each child to have his special times alone with both parents, or one parent. This gives a chance for another kind of important closeness and the expression of particular interests that not everyone in the family may enjoy.

As in other areas of family life, the balanced, middle-of-the-road way is generally best, with some home-made and some professionally made entertainment.

### Television, radio, movies, and comics

You may question the quality of some commercial entertainment and with good reason. Many parents worry about how some movies, comics, TV, and radio programs will affect their children.

Your own six- to twelve-year-old is apt to be an enthusiastic "looking, listening, and comic reading addict." His interests in these activities are likely to reach a peak when he is around ten years old. Within three or four years, he will probably become considerably less enchanted with them, especially if he is getting along successfully in school.

Television is not likely to hurt a child's eyes, if he sits in a somewhat, but not completely, darkened room, not too close to the screen. Nor does it necessarily interfere with his school work—especially if rules are observed about finishing homework first. Younger boys and girls who look at television a great deal often have an unusually large vocabulary when they enter the first grade, but the children who spend little or no time watching TV soon catch up.

It is unclear as to whether television, radio, movies, and comics have a harmful effect on children. No study has proved

conclusively that these "mass media," in themselves, cause youngsters to have adjustment problems or to become delinquent. Recent research, however, does suggest that many programs give a false and overly simple picture of life. The best protection against such false ideas is the standards a child learns from his parents. How a child reacts to these programs depends on his particular makeup, previous experience and information, the beliefs and values that are already a part of him.

While television viewing does not in itself seem to cause a youngster to have adjustment problems or to become delinquent, it is possible that unsupervised viewing can deepen or stimulate an expression of the problems that the youngster already has. Children who feel unhappy, lonely, or angry generally tend to look at TV more than do those who are more satisfied with themselves and their lives. The same is true of radio, movies, and the comics. It is a good idea to try to help such children find more active and creative ways of finding relief from their feelings.

All of these forms of entertainment offer your child a quick, easy trip to adventureland, far away from the disappointments and boredom he may meet in everyday life. Some escape from the real world can be helpful to him. Carried to extremes, however, this kind of escape can stand in the way of his facing up to important problems in his real life. For a child to spend all or most of his free time at the TV set may be a signal that he is seriously upset and that he may need help from a professional counselor.

"Horror stories" on TV or in the movies do seriously frighten many children, especially when no adult watches with them. Bad dreams and continuing fears are apt to haunt the boy or girl who watches them. Therefore, if your child wants to see these programs and if you think he should have this privilege, you should be part of the audience, too. You may notice that he is more likely to be upset when he watches such a program late in the evening when he is tired.

Many mothers and fathers observe that their youngsters often become restless and fussy from prolonged sitting and looking. Your growing child needs plenty of exercise. This is one reason why it's a good idea to put a limit on how much time he spends on TV and other forms of inactive recreation.

However, you are likely to find it rewarding to share some



of your child's reading and watching interests. You can have the fun of observing your child's growth in understanding as he reads, looks, and listens. Moreover, you can talk with him about the ideas that are being shown and help him to see that they often give a false, too simple picture of life.

You can also help your child if he becomes confused about what he reads and sees. As you show a sympathetic interest in your child's entertainment world and as you explain parts of it to him, you will gradually raise his standards. Your standards, however, can't be forced on him. In your sincere desire to give your children "nothing but the best," you might "oversell" programs and books that are labeled "educational" or "classical."

Your youngster is apt to find many of these a bit stuffy as a regular diet, especially if such fare is chiefly for older boys and girls or adults. In general, he is more apt to follow your lead if you show, by example, that the "best" programs and books have real meaning to you, and give him the opportunity to learn that they hold real enjoyment for him.

At times you may want to ban certain books, movies, and programs. You may feel strongly that your child, and other children, shouldn't see them. In these instances, you may want to join with other parents to take group action.

Some families set standards for their children's entertainment by setting up a few basic rules. Some limit the amount of time their youngsters can spend each week in looking at TV, listening to the radio, going to the movies, and reading comics. Admittedly, this takes planning, since each child has to work out his schedule with his parents. It can be done, especially through advance discussion and the use of program guides.

You may also want to make rules about whether your family dinner hour will feature TV with a side dish of food. Since your evening meal might be one of the few times when everyone is together and since it probably is the heartiest meal of the day, it is best to stress family conversation and healthy eating at this time.

### **Rituals and celebrations**

**Good times in your family are not always built around fun**

and entertainment, of course. As a family, you can mark a particular religious event with a particular celebration.

Your child will gain in many ways by taking part in special ceremonies observed by your family at home, school, and church. They mark for your youngster the passage of time and a sense of family growth. They provide him with a chance to give, as well as to receive.

These events don't have to be fancy. Feelings that go with them—of joy, importance, and love—are more vital than how much money is spent on them.

School celebrations, to which parents are invited, also have some of these qualities. If you attend the school pageant, music night, or graduation day with your child, you show your pride and belief in his part of his world and in his place in it.

Your child is also apt to glory in the excitement and beauty of special holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Independence Day. Each of our national holidays carries with it a sense of the importance of history. Appealing songs, readings, stories, and symbols are attached to these days. Words and visions plant themselves in your child's mind with a kind of lasting splendor. Then, too, your youngster gets a sense of belonging to something far bigger than himself by taking part in these celebrations. He gets a sense of himself as being related to long ago, now, and to the future. He is apt to absorb values such as George Washington's courage, Abraham Lincoln's honesty, and the passion of our first settlers for responsible freedom.

Religious holidays and observances also have these important values—and carry with them an even loftier and deeper idealism. For religion concerns itself with the deepest issues of life: the basic purpose of living, questions of right and wrong, the relationship of one person to all other persons, birth, growth, and death, and the nature of our universe. Religious rituals have always been used by human beings all over the world as a central part of worship, celebration, mourning, rejoicing, and as a guide to how each group member should behave.

Perhaps you feel that the meaning of special holidays is in danger of becoming lost under the modern pressure to celebrate them with expensive gifts, cards, decorations, and fancy food. Homemade decorations and mementos can in-

crease your family's sense of a personal, deep sharing in the occasion.

Parents who want their children to be guided more by ideas and ideals than by dollar signs and things should make a particular point of discussing the true meaning of these holidays with their youngsters. They should join with them in attending special celebrations to mark the meaning of the day or season. When parents and children share such experiences, a sense of family closeness is increased. The child's love for his parents and his sense of worship are permanently woven together.

### Alone at home is good, too

Although you and your child share many activities, you don't have to do everything together. Probably, each member of your family will appreciate having some time to be alone.

How much "aloneness" each person wants depends a bit on what each is like as a person. Especially as your child becomes older (around ten or eleven), he is likely to claim more privacy for himself. His interest in being a separate individual generally grows stronger. He also may develop a feeling of modesty about his body.

As his desire for "separateness" grows, he normally will want a room of his own. If you can't arrange this, at least you may be able to give him a corner of a room that belongs to him. Shelves, boxes, or a chest of drawers that can hold his personal belongings are almost a "must." One ten-year-old girl, driven to desperation by her prying younger brother, like a little squirrel dug a hole in the backyard in which to hide her special treasures.

Mother and father need privacy, too. You need a time and place to be together as a couple, separate from your children. Also, both of you will want a chance, sometimes, to be completely alone.

All in all, family good times provide a rich, social diet for family members. But it needs to be balanced with the simpler diet of two-by-twoing or sometimes, even solo-ing.

## chapter 6

# YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH

Like all other parents, you want your children to be healthy. You know that good health is far more than not being sick.

It is having plenty of energy for play as well as for work. It is having a strong body you can count on for running, walking, climbing, and stretching. It is being able to see the small print in a book, the pigeon strutting down the sidewalk, or the mountain on the horizon. It is being able to hear the rustle of wind in the grass and the teacher's voice in the classroom.

Healthy children have the physical equipment to make full use of the opportunities that come their way. They are more ready to learn, more skillful and joyous in play, better able to enjoy what is good in life, and to conquer what is hard.

Healthy children are also apt to become healthy adults. Their bodies grow better if they get enough exercise, rest, and the right kind of food when they are young. These factors also help them build up reserves of strength and energy for when they are older.

Food, exercise, and rest are only part of the health story, of course. You also want to protect your family from illnesses. Your doctor will guide you in the details of the specific care that family members need.

Now is the time, also, for children to learn about maintaining good health in the future. You can tell them, for instance, that smoking is a serious threat to health, and why. If they learn these facts early, they may never want to experiment with cigarettes later.

### **Keeping clean helps your family to keep well**

Following a few simple rules of cleanliness can give a boost to prevention of illness in your family.

As you know, it is important to keep food and all cooking and eating equipment clean. Remember, too, that flies and other insects are likely to carry disease and that all foods and eating equipment must be protected from them.

Careful hand-washing is one of the most important rules for family health. Even when hands look clean, they can carry germs that cause illness. This is especially true in reference to colds, many kinds of digestive upsets such as diarrhea and vomiting, and some other contagious diseases. Like many other habits, handwashing can, in time, become so natural to your child that you won't have to check on him any more about this.

Clean clothes also play their part in keeping families healthy. It is an excellent practice to wash clothes thoroughly, especially handkerchiefs and underthings, and especially if there has been sickness in the home.

If a member of your family has had a contagious disease, your doctor is likely to give you specific instructions about disinfecting the clothes, dishes, towels, etc., which this ill person has used. He will probably advise that the ill person use tissues instead of handkerchiefs and that these tissues be disposed of promptly after use, preferably by burning them. If you follow your doctor's instructions carefully, you have a much better chance of preventing the spread of illness in your family.

### **Active play aids health**

Planning exercise for your six- to twelve-year-old may seem downright foolish. To many parents, the problem appears to go in the opposite direction: finding a way to get their sons and daughters to sit still for more than a few minutes.

But, in our modern age, it is sometimes necessary to see to it that your child exercises actively. If you give your youngster the space and equipment for active play, he is apt to go along enthusiastically with an exercise program.

Your child is more apt to like this if it comes under the

heading of sports and play rather than something that is labeled exercise.

This doesn't mean that he should have special lessons in the various sports. Nor does it mean that he has to have a lot of fancy equipment. It does mean that he should have a safe place to play, like a yard or playground.

He also will benefit from having a few simple sports supplies, like roller skates and a ball and bat. If you live in a neighborhood with other children, you may want to plan with their parents in pooling equipment.

Or, if you live in a yardless area, you might get together with other parents to promote a well-equipped community playground. Some schools keep their recreation spaces supervised and available to children and parents throughout the year and after school hours.

Your child can also get exercise right at home. After all, there are times when he can't be out of doors.

Within the limits of your particular budget and home, you can provide activity inside your house or apartment. For instance, an old mattress on the floor makes a dandy place for young headstanders, somersaulters, wrestlers, and boxers. Games of darts, Ping-Pong, and balloon volley ball are a few possible active indoor sports. You can get more suggestions along this line from books on home recreation.

Besides having play equipment and space, your child will benefit from a bit of sports-teaching. If you have any athletic ability at all, it will probably do both of you good if you take time to play with him. This is especially true when he is less than nine or ten.

Your child will enjoy and benefit from physical activity if he is encouraged to go about it in his own way without pressure to engage in any particular sport and without pressure to be a star performer.

### Emotions and health

Your child's health, as well as your own, is also affected by feelings. When a person is unhappy or worried, his body is less able to fight off infections. Feelings of loneliness, fear, and anger may be so upsetting that they bring about real physical pain, such as a headache or stomach cramps. The physical and emotional sides of life are partners. Poor physi-

cal health can upset behavior, and upset emotions can undermine the body's strength to fight disease. For this reason, the general well-being of each family member is promoted by a well-balanced, daily combination of satisfying experiences and good physical care.

It is important, however, not to be too concerned about your child's minor aches and pains, and emotional upsets. If you are, your youngster may take delight in the dramatic role of fragile invalid. If you pass over his complaints rather casually and stress your affection for him as a person, he will feel less need to be sick in order to find out how much you love him. He will probably discover that he "just can't be bothered" with illnesses if he has your steady love, friends, lots of satisfying play, an absorbing hobby, and a zest for living. On the other hand, if life seems to be just one long, dull, gray day after another, full of failures and disappointments, sickness can look like a wonderful escape.

### Good teeth and good health

As in other matters of growth, your child will follow his own timetable in the development of his teeth.

You should take your child to the dentist at least twice a year. Many grownups suffer from poor teeth because they did not get the proper dental care when they were young. We now know that cavities in teeth must be filled as soon as they develop. This is true of baby teeth as well as permanent ones.

If your child has been fortunate enough to have grown up in a community where the water supply contains fluorine, chances are quite good that he will have fewer dental defects. There is no doubt that a proper amount of fluorine in the drinking water is harmless and can reduce by two-thirds the number of cavities in children's teeth. If your water supply does not contain sufficient fluorine, a dentist may wish to suggest other techniques that also are effective, although to a lesser degree, toward preventing dental defects.

Some dentists now specialize in work with children. You may want to find out whether there is such a specialist in your community. Dentists who limit their services to children are not only specially trained in meeting a child's physical needs, but they are also particularly skillful in dealing with

that well-known "dentist panic" which so many people, young and old, seem to have.

### Signs of physical illness

It isn't always easy to tell whether your youngster is physically ill or emotionally upset. Common signs of physical illness are: loss of appetite, sudden irritability, restless sleep, extreme fatigue, pain, and a rise in temperature. However, most of these symptoms may also be signs of disturbed feelings. It is always a good idea to check with your doctor if any of these distress signals come on suddenly, continue for more than a few hours, or appear again and again.

### Preventing illness in your family

Nourishing food, plenty of exercise, cleanliness, and rest are not the whole health story for your family. Part of giving your youngster a healthy home environment involves the prevention of illness. Although your child probably is sick less often than when he was younger, he still requires good care.

Regular medical examinations at least once a year are a part of this care. Perhaps your child is examined every year by the school doctor. If so, it is a good idea for you to be present at the time so you can talk to him about your youngster's health. If this doctor recommends more medical attention for your child, you will want to follow this advice by taking him to your own physician or to a clinic.

Regular health care by your own doctor or through a good school health program not only helps to keep your child well, it also gives you a chance to find out early whether your youngster has a handicap—such as poor vision or poor hearing. If your physician recommends glasses for your child, he will probably pass on to you the advice of experts to the effect that children's glasses should have shatter-resistant lenses and sturdy, flame-proof frames.

Many physical problems can often be treated successfully, and the earlier the treatment is started the better. An untreated health problem is apt to get worse. Moreover, if your child is struggling with a handicap, he is likely to have trouble with his school work. Unfortunately, not all handi-



caps can be cured. But, in most cases, a child can, at least, be helped to live better with his condition.

### Immunizations

You will want to be sure your child has protection through immunizations. Probably he was given a series of DPT injections when he was a baby. The initials, DPT, stand for the diseases against which these injections protect him: diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus. He needs a booster injection of DPT when he is three or four years old, and shots for diphtheria and tetanus should be given again when he is eight and twelve.

Your child was probably vaccinated against smallpox, too, when he was a baby. The vaccination should be repeated every five years. It will probably be due about the time he enters first grade, and again when he is around eleven years old.

Check with your doctor or health department about protection against polio. And check, too, to see whether your child has had the DPT and measles immunizations or smallpox vaccinations he should have had in the past.

### Colds and contagious diseases

During your child's first few years of school, he is likely to have such common, contagious diseases as chicken pox and mumps. See Appendix (Common Communicable Diseases, pages 139-140).

A series of colds may also plague your youngster, since he is almost certain to be exposed to a thriving crop of them in school. You may be able to cut down on your child's colds by seeing to it that he has plenty of natural protection: enough rest, exercise, and a good diet. And he should be kept away from other diseases at this time as he may be more susceptible to other infections.

Your child is not apt to be very sick when he has a cold, but he will probably get over it faster if you keep him warm and dry, and follow the doctor's orders. Colds not checked in time can lead to serious illnesses such as pneumonia and rheumatic fever.

## chapter 7

# YOUR CHILD'S FOOD

You know that good food promotes child and family health in many ways. It builds strong bodies, and being well fed also gives your youngsters a sense of being loved and protected. As eleven-year-old Bobby said to his mother, "Every time something goes wrong in our family, you try to solve it with hot cocoa. When you think things are especially bad, you put two marshmallows in every cup."

Naturally, you can't drown your family's woes in a flood of cocoa and marshmallows. Delicious as both are, you realize that good family feeding takes a lot of know-how, as well as a lot of love.

Therefore, as you plan meals for your family, it is important to bear in mind that each member needs certain kinds of foods every day. These include the following: milk and foods containing milk; fruits and vegetables; meat, poultry, or fish; whole grain or enriched bread and cereals; fats and sugars.

The daily guide to foods, which follows, should be a practical help to you in menu planning. Although this list applies to your six- to twelve-year-old child, the same foods can be used for all members of the family. Some adjustments in the kind of food, size of portion, or method of preparation may be needed for those on special diets, or for the baby, or an aged member of the family.

### Importance of the food groups

Each of the broad food groups included in the daily food plan has a special job to do in building an adequate diet. For example, milk is the leading source of calcium which is essential for the development of bones and teeth.

Milk also contains high quality protein and is an excellent source of riboflavin, other vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and fat. Milk products such as cheese and ice cream supply these nutrients but in quite different amounts. Whole milk normally contains very small amounts of vitamin D, but milk to which vitamin D has been added becomes a valuable source of this nutrient.

The foods in the meat group are important for the amount and quality of the protein they provide. Protein is important mainly as a tissue builder. It is a part of muscle, organs, blood, skin, hair, and other living tissues. Dried beans, peas, and nuts also supply protein but it is a lower quality than the protein of meat and milk. Besides protein these foods provide iron, thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin.

Vegetables and fruits are valuable because of the vitamins and minerals they contain. Vitamin A is very important for growth and development in children for normal vision, and for a healthy skin condition. Another important vitamin is ascorbic acid or vitamin C, which is essential for healthy gums and body tissues.

Breads and cereals—whole grain, enriched, restored—furnish worthwhile amounts of thiamine, iron, niacin, protein, and food energy.

You can get all the foods listed in the guide from the grocery store. Usually children will get all the vitamins and minerals they need from a good, varied diet and supplements are not necessary. Occasionally a doctor may prescribe vitamin D in some form if the child is not getting enough through foods like milk, margarine, and cereals which often have vitamin D added to them.

### Your child's appetite

Within limits, it is generally more important what your child eats than how much. Many youngsters overplay fats and sugars and underplay the other essential foods.

So long as your child is healthy and not seriously under- or overweight, it is a good idea not to push him to eat more or less than he naturally wants. Since each child has his own natural rate and style of growth, each will require varying amounts of food. However, if he suddenly loses his appetite, you will want to check on his physical and emotional health.

type of food	each day
<b>MILK GROUP</b>	
Milk.....Children under 9.....	2 to 3 cups
Children 9-12.....	3 or more cups
Dairy products such as:	
Cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, and ice cream .....	May be used some- times in place of milk
<b>VEGETABLE-FRUIT GROUP .....</b>	<b>4 or more servings</b>
Include—	
A fruit or vegetable that contains a high amount of vitamin C: grape- fruit, oranges, and tomatoes (whole or in juice), raw cabbage, green or sweet red pepper, broccoli, and fresh strawberries	
A dark green or deep yellow vege- table or fruit for vitamin A (you can judge fairly well by color— dark green and deep yellow): broc- coli, spinach, greens, cantaloupe, apricots, carrots, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, winter squash	
Other vegetables and fruits, including potatoes	
<b>MEAT AND MEAT SUBSTITUTES ..</b>	<b>2 or more servings</b>
Include—	
Meat, poultry, fish, or eggs .....	1 or more servings
Dried beans or peas, peanut butter, and nuts can be used as meat substi- tutes.	
<b>BREADS AND CEREALS .....</b>	<b>4 or more servings</b>
Whole grain, enriched, or restored bread and cereals or other grain prod- ucts such as corn meal, grits, mac- aroni, spaghetti, and rice.	

## PLUS OTHER FOODS

To round out meals and to satisfy the appetite, many children will eat more of these foods, and other foods not specified will be used, such as—butter, margarine, other fats, oils, sugars, and unenriched refined grain products. These “other” foods are frequently combined with the suggested foods in mixed dishes, baked goods, desserts, and other recipe dishes. They are a part of daily meals, even though they are not stressed in the food plan.

When a normally enthusiastic eater turns down food, it can be a sign that something ails him.

### Overweight children

It is easy for your child to overeat. Some six- to twelve-year-old children are overweight simply because they eat too much and exercise too little. Most six- to twelve-year-olds are eager to keep up with their running, leaping, somersaulting playmates. It's no fun to be chosen as a natural base for the pyramid, the ballast in the rowboat, or the fat clown in the neighborhood circus.

They need plenty of food for energy and growth, but often need to watch their weight. This could mean preventing excessive weight gain as well as losing weight. Many times, children get fat because they are taught to eat more than they need. Beginning with babyhood, parents have a responsibility and an opportunity to develop good eating practices in their children and to provide the right kind and amount of food in the family meals. If your child appears too plump, take a good look at what and how much he is eating. Often it is possible to control obesity by reducing the kind and amount of between meal snacks, cutting down on butter, fried foods, salad dressings, and rich desserts.

If your child continues to gain excessively, take him to his physician for an examination. The physician will determine if

he is overweight and will recommend how to handle the problem.

Some children eat too much partly because of emotional problems. This is discussed more fully later in the text.

### **The underweight child**

The underweight and the undernourished child is of concern to parents. Sometimes the long, lean type of child is assumed to be underweight when he really isn't. On the other hand, he may be underweight because of not enough food, overactivity, lack of sleep, infectious disease, or other factors which affect his appetite and food intake.

Whether your child is actually underweight or overweight should be determined by the physician who will then give advice on correcting the cause.

### **Family meals**

Fortunately for you and your youngster, his daily food needs and yours can be met by many kinds of foods. You can pay attention to the special likes and dislikes of your family and still give them healthy meals. Remembering that people naturally have different tastes, you can be sympathetic to your child who, for instance, may heartily dislike cauliflower. As you study your family, your food guide, and your budget you will be able to work out meals that satisfy your family's health, happiness, and pocketbook all at once.

### **Keeping peace at mealtime**

Planning and cooking meals are only part of your job in feeding the family. There is also the matter of setting a peaceful family "tone" at mealtimes. You know that food tastes better and appetites are keener when mealtimes are pleasant.

The light touch may help—such as taking it easy on the question of table manners. The art of skillful eating comes slowly. Some parents find that youngsters are embarrassed if their manners are corrected in front of the whole family. Quiet teaching goes better when you and your small amateur are alone. He surely won't enjoy his food nor digest it as

comfortably if he is constantly reminded about his eating techniques. If you give him time to grow and set a good example yourself, you will probably have more enjoyable mealtimes; and, in the long run, a more dependably courteous youngster.

You probably try to avoid talking about problems at meals. Parents can often set the mealtime tone by stressing interesting and pleasant happenings of the day, drawing everyone into the conversation, and giving each person a chance to talk.

Another way to avoid trouble is to use table mats that can be wiped off, unbreakable dishes, and tumblers that don't tumble. One mother found that she felt better about her children's messiness when she got a "crumb-colored rug with a pattern like grease spots."

### Your child at the grocery store

Maybe your children would like to help with marketing and food planning. Going to the grocery store with your youngsters may not be the easiest way to buy your food, but your sons and daughters are likely to get a lot out of the experience. Especially if you encourage them to help you make your grocery list and figure out how much money can be spent. Chances are that, with practice, your child can eventually be a real help to you as assistant chief marketer. Also, with your guidance, he will learn to be a smart consumer, and that is quite an accomplishment.

### Snacks and treats

It appears that, unless parents firm up their "no" power, our children may become a nation of unwise snackers. Not that there's anything wrong with a between-meal pickup. There is danger in going overboard on soft drinks, too much candy, and greasy foods that add pounds but not much basic nourishment. Too many sweets, moreover, are likely to damage teeth.

One way to prevent "snacks unlimited" is to see to it that your child has three hearty meals a day. Another way of limiting the money flow from home to snack-counter is to put him on an allowance. If he has 25 cents a week to spend

on "treats," for instance, and, if you stick with this rule, he will find out before long that he has to stop and count before he spends. It might also increase his interest in the seemingly free meals to be had at home.

### Avoiding those breakfast blues

To avoid the morning rush hour panic, it is a good idea to set the table and plan the breakfast menu the night before. Gather up the school supplies. Figure out what each person will wear. It does take organization. But family life goes better in many ways if crises are headed off by thinking ahead.

You and your children will get along much better at breakfast and through the morning if you all eat well, without being rushed. Breakfast menus don't have to follow a set routine. For instance, if your youngster rebels against cereals and egg, there's nothing wrong with a frankfurter or hamburger along with fruit juice and milk. A peanut butter sandwich, a serving of custard pudding, a glass of milk, and an orange in the pocket to eat on the way to school is a pretty good beginning for the day. You don't have to have the usual breakfast foods everyday. But it is a good idea to have milk in the morning meal, or growing children may not get the amount needed during the course of the day. The same is true of vitamin C foods such as oranges or grapefruit. If they're missed at breakfast, be sure to include them in another meal.

Breakfast foods are simple, and often the six- to twelve-year-old enjoys preparing his own meal. He can take this responsibility if you help him by having foods at hand that are easy to prepare or even by withholding your criticism if he decides to eat the leftover spaghetti and meatballs or make a "dagwood" sandwich with all the trimmings.

### Lunch for your school-age child

Maybe your youngster eats in the cafeteria in school. Some schools have enough teachers and lunchroom helpers to guide young customers, but a bit of home discussion on the topic will help. Here, as elsewhere, parents and teachers can operate as a team.



You might live close enough to school so your child can come home for lunch. Many parents and youngsters like such an arrangement. This is a time when you can give him the foods he particularly relishes. This is a time when he can share with you the trials and triumphs of his morning. He can go back to school refreshed with good food and bolstered by knowledge that his mother is interested in him and his special world.

As your child gets a bit older, he may scorn his home-for-lunch program. Like other nine- to twelve-year-olds, he may vastly prefer the social life of lunch with his buddies.

## chapter 8

### REST AND SLEEP

You and your children need enough rest. There is no set rule for how much rest your child should have. More than likely, he can get by with somewhat less sleep as he gets older. During the years between six and twelve, he is not growing as fast as he was earlier and thus is not using up so much physical energy. Typically, most youngsters at this age bounce energetically through the day without a nap and with only short rest periods.

This ready supply of energy is especially typical of children over the age of seven or eight. Younger ones may get along better if they have longer and more frequent "quiet hours."

#### Dealing with those bedtime battles

Your child will probably accept going to bed more easily if you and he work together on the time for "good night." Although you have the final say, his point of view is worth considering. Just when he should go to bed depends on how much sleep he needs. And that depends on his age, his health, his day's activities, and what kind of person he is. Your six-year-old, for instance, probably requires about eleven hours of sleep and your eleven-year-old may do nicely with nine.

If your child bounces gaily out of bed in the morning, full of zip, he is probably getting enough sleep. If he gets up long before family rising time, maybe he is going to bed too early. If you have to drag him from his slumbers, he probably is not getting enough rest.

Your six- to twelve-year-old should be able to understand

why he has a particular bedtime and the importance of rest to his own well-being. But, although he understands all this, he still may balk when the hour comes.

If you let him know fifteen minutes or so in advance that the time is approaching, he is likely to put up less of a fuss. No one wants to be interrupted in the middle of an activity with an abrupt "Time to quit." Another idea along this line is to help him plan his evening projects in advance so there won't be a last minute rush. Then, too, activities should take on a calm, quiet tone as bedtime draws near.

It is sometimes hard to bring about this before bedtime calm. Some children get fussier and more excitable in the evening. The tired they get, the less willing they may be to call it quits. If your child acts this way, he will get along better if you very firmly take him in hand and start him to bed.

He will accept this more happily if special treats are connected with this hour. Perhaps a glass of milk or some fruit has a soothing effect. Younger children love to have a story. Older ones probably prefer to read their own, but may enjoy a little visit with you. It is a good time for you to listen quietly while your child talks about his today and considers his tomorrow. You may have an evening prayer, or a good night song that you sing together. Perhaps you have a set routine that your youngster demands every night.

Rituals appeal to younger children as having a kind of magic effect in protecting them from the perils of giving up and trusting themselves to sleep. They may also want a special teddy bear—or blanket or book—or the new pair of shoes to keep them company. Such bedmates bring comfort and surely won't cause any harm. Older youngsters usually have overcome their bedtime fears and have less need for a set pattern of retiring.

If your child has a comfortable bed in a quiet room, he is likely to relax and go to sleep more easily. He also should have a bed that is large enough for him, a firm mattress, and light, but warm bed clothing.

Even with all this in his favor, your youngster may put you through a few more paces before he is ready to settle down. After you have said your supposedly last good night, you may hear such complaints as: "I'm hungry." "I'm

thirsty." "I bumped my foot." "I'm hot." If you calmly and definitely let your child know that you know these are excuses to stay up and that you aren't falling for them, he is likely to give in pretty quickly.

## chapter 9

# SAFETY FOR YOUR CHILD

Accidents kill or cripple more children than any disease does. The chief causes of accidental death to youngsters in this age group are automobiles, drowning, fire, explosions, and firearms. As your child's play leads him on to wider explorations and experiments, you will want to keep track of his activities and teach him how to live safely.

### Caution can be overdone

The following section on accident prevention may stir up your fears for your child's safety too much. While it is true that you must be alert to the protection of your youngster, it is also true that too much worry on your part can be harmful to him. When children are overly anxious about their own welfare, tension can lead them to have more accidents or to be hurt more severely when they do encounter danger. Panic prevents clear thinking and skillful action when threats to safety loom.

Some suggestions for your know-how and his are given here. Ideally, parents slowly and calmly teach their youngsters over a period of time not only to protect, but also to enjoy, themselves. If you can give your child plenty of know-how, a pinch of caution, and a general sense of well-being, he has a very good chance of escaping harm and of developing courage in his approach to life.

### Booby traps at home

If your child is like most children, he probably strews the

house and yard with his toys and play equipment. For his own sake and yours, not to mention his equipment, he may need to be reminded over and over again to put his toys where they belong. Otherwise, they can become booby traps leading to accidents.

### **Home appliances and equipment**

The modern home is full of mechanical and chemical marvels that make life easier, pleasanter, and more healthful. Now that your child is growing older and becoming more skillful, it is time for you to teach him, step by step, how to use these appliances in the right way.

Over a period of time, you can show him how to light the oven, run the washing machine, use sharp knives correctly, and operate the vacuum cleaner. As he learns more about how to use electricity, gas, and oil as sources of power, he should be learning about their dangers. He must understand the hazards of frayed electric cords, broken electric plugs, exposed wires, and using metal to take toast from the toaster. He should learn that it is never safe for a person to touch an electric switch when he is standing in water or on a wet surface, or when his hands are wet.

### **Fire**

Even the brightest youngster needs time to fully understand the explosive powers of gas, gasoline, many cleaning fluids, and other chemicals. He has to have a certain amount of supervised experience with such things to realize that oils and greases burn very rapidly; that grass fires easily get out of control, especially on windy days; that camp fires should always be doused with water before they are left; that if one's hair or clothing catches fire, the right thing to do is to roll on the ground or in a blanket, never to start running or walking away.

### **Firearms**

It is becoming more and more important to teach children the correct use and the dangers of guns because there seem to be so many of them around. The National Rifle Associa-

tion and your local health department offer a course in home firearms. If you give a gun to your child, be sure you know the rules and regulations which are necessary for its safe use. Teach these rules to your child. If you have firearms in your home, you will want to see that they are unloaded and kept in a locked closet. If your child is eager to learn to shoot, it is a good idea for him to be taught by an expert. Marksmanship and handling of guns and pistols can be taught to older boys and girls under safe conditions. All children need to learn that no gun of any kind should ever be pointed at any person, even in fun.

### Medicines and poisons

Most homes regularly have on hand an assortment of dangerous chemicals. Some of these are in ordinary household cleaning materials and in most insecticides. In nearly every bathroom cabinet are common drugs that can harm children.

You can do several things to lessen these hazards to your child's well-being. All drugs and cleaning preparations should be kept out of reach of children under the age of eight or nine. Poisons should be locked up. Your older child can gradually be taught to read labels, and to understand and safely use common home remedies and cleansers. You will want to warn him to keep dangerous materials away from his younger brothers and sisters and never to give them medicine unless you have told him to do this. Many families clean out their medicine cabinets and utility closets regularly, destroying all unlabeled bottles and cans. The contents of these bottles and cans can be flushed down the toilet. They should be washed out before they are put in the trash. Medicines on the shelves for more than six months have probably lost their value anyway. Some drugs become poisons after they have been kept too long. Teach your child not to take any medicine without consulting you first.

Although safety begins at home, it certainly doesn't stop there. Your six- to twelve-year-old is likely to become more venturesome with each passing month. His activities are apt to lead him to play in alleys and streets. Since this is extremely dangerous in most communities, you will have to

firmly say "no" to it. This "no" will be accepted more readily if you give him other equally interesting things to do.

Your young explorer will not be safe simply because he has a playground. Because he is eager for adventure, he is not likely to stick to one, or even several, recreation areas. For this reason, you will want to step up your lessons in traffic safety. These lessons should include instructions on bike riding and roller skating, as well as walking. If you can join with neighbors in setting up basic safety rules, all the children on your block will have better protection and fewer arguments will occur such as, "Jimmie doesn't have to cross the street at the traffic light. Why do I?"

When he rides in automobiles, teach him to always use the seat belt. Be sure the family car has this equipment.

### **Sidewalks protect young walkers and wheelers**

Most streets and all highways offer serious dangers to the foot-traveler, not to mention the bike or scooter rider, the roller skater, and the small pushers of doll buggies and wagons. But many neighborhoods lack sidewalks.

This lack of safe walk-ways also makes children dependent on the family car or the bus to get to schools, stores, recreation centers, and so on. Since it is good for your child to learn to get safely around his community on his own feet, you may want to work with other parents to see to it that sidewalks are provided in your area.

Safety for the young traveler is not just a matter of sidewalks and traffic instructions. In many of our communities, children require protection from a host of other dangers. Such community services as a well-trained police force, slum clearance, city planning, good recreation programs are needed for the health and safety of every child.

Then, too, your child needs to be taught about other dangers in his surroundings. If he flies a kite, he should be taught to keep it away from power lines. He should be taught to stay away from dumps, quarries, torches burning at street barricades, steep ravines, pools, swamps, buildings being wrecked, and places where blasting is going on. A healthy respect for fenced enclosures and "No trespassing" signs may save his life. Since children are attracted to such places by



their urge to explore, it is important to help them find safer ways to adventure, such as in parks, playgrounds, family trips, club activities, and so on.

### Safety from strangers

One of your worries about your child's safety away from home probably is concerned with his being hurt or frightened by some stranger. Although adult crimes against children are relatively few, dangers do exist, especially in large cities.

While you want to warn your child about such dangers, you do not want to frighten him too much. Some parents tend to overcaution their little girls and they sometimes grow up with an unfortunate feeling that all men are dangerous. Such feelings may stand in the way of falling in love and marrying happily.

You may want to quietly explain to both your sons and daughters that some people—a very few, as a matter of fact—are so mixed up in their own feelings that they express their interest in sex in very peculiar ways. Your child will generally be safe from persons of this kind if he always refuses rides or treats from strangers, comes home before dark, stays with a group of children, and looks on policemen as his friends and protectors.

As you discuss such matters with your youngster, you will want to answer his questions and give him the feeling that he can tell you about any upsetting event that occurs.

If your child does have unfortunate contacts with strangers, it is best to treat the matter as calmly as possible. Get all the facts you can from your youngster and report the matter to the police. The police will be greatly aided in their work if your child can give an accurate description of the stranger. Police also stress that youngsters be trained to memorize license numbers of automobiles if they are molested or threatened by people who are in cars.

Another way to protect your child from strangers is to provide him with good times and good feelings at home and in his own neighborhood. Children who are mostly happy with themselves and their surroundings are less likely to be tempted by gifts or seeming friendliness from people they don't know.

### Safety after nightfall

Even though you try to make your child happy at home, as he gets older, he is likely to want to play outdoors or wander about after dark. You can't blame him for loving the mystery and adventure of the nighttime world.

But in most parts of our country, parents or other adults need to be with youngsters after nightfall. This doesn't mean, of course, that your child can't go to club meetings or go visiting in the evening, especially when there is no school the next day. But it does mean that you should check as to whether responsible older persons will be with your boys and girls at these times. Also, if your child has to go far to reach his destination, an older person should go with him, or, at least, he should travel with a group. No exact rules can be made about this, since some neighborhoods are safer than others.

### Water safety

Your child is probably enchanted by water in any form, from puddles to oceans. Therefore, it is essential for him to learn how to swim early in life. Perhaps you can teach him yourself. If not, you are apt to find that your community offers swimming lessons that are free or low in cost.

You and your child should also know the basic rules of water safety. He should understand that he must not swim in unguarded or unknown bodies of water; that it is best not to go into the water alone; that it is wise to wait for an hour after a meal before going swimming; that it is not smart to rock a small boat, especially if there is anyone in it who can't swim. Also, all nonswimmers should wear life jackets when playing on or near the water.

## chapter 10

# FAMILY WORK AND MONEY

It is probably better for you—and your children—if they share the work as well as the fun and benefits of family life.

### Work for your child

As you think about how much work you can and should ask your children to do, here are some things for you to consider. It is probably kindest to children, in the long run, if you require them to do a certain amount of work about the house. They learn necessary skills in this way. They get the feeling of doing their share as they develop attitudes of responsibility and self-discipline. By sharing the work, they release you from some burdens. This gives you more time and energy for good times with your family. You may want to carry out a share-the-work program. A child responds much more readily and happily to "work plans" if these include the parents working along with him. Too often, we assign lonely as well as unpleasant tasks to our children instead of really sharing.

A discussion of jobs to be done, including who, when, and where, is a good start. Holding your child to the task also improves his work. When it is well done, lavish the small producer with praise. In fact, all the principles of family leadership and discipline apply to the issue of your working child.

You will also find it useful to try to adjust home jobs to your youngster's age, personality, skills, and interests. One child might be an enthusiastic polisher, for instance, once you get him started. Another might be a whiz at cookie baking,

while another takes to the washing machine with pride and skill.

Despite their special abilities, your sons and daughters are apt to prefer a variety of jobs. Who, after all, wants to be a dish drying specialist day after day? As your children get older, you can step up what you expect of them and ask them to do more and more complicated jobs. Often parents do not realize how much their youngsters can do, given enough training, challenge, and praise.

Not all jobs, of course, center in your home. As your child gets older, he may want to expand his earning and learning power. Your eleven- or twelve-year-old may be able to find small jobs in your neighborhood, especially if you have trained him well at home. There is work like lawn-mowing, snow-shoveling, and plant-watering for vacationing neighbors. Since he is still so young, you will want to guide, teach, and protect him in his first jobs. For his protection, you will want to know the people for whom he works.

All of these jobs require him to be responsible and skillful. He will have to be on time and do his work well. He will have to stay with it until he finishes. He will need to plan his time and energy so he doesn't find himself scheduled for homework, a party, and a job all at the same moment. As the parent of a young worker, you are apt to find yourself busy, too, giving him a bit of supervision.

If your child learns to be a responsible employee early in life, he is more likely to develop into a valued full-time employee when he is older.

### **Your child and his money**

Some kind of allowance system usually works well if it is carefully planned in discussion with your child and if you and he stick to it. Just as in any kind of budgeting, you and he will need to figure out how much he must spend each week and how much income is possible. There is also the matter of how much he would like to spend. Here, again, you will doubtless have to set some limits.

Planning his own income and outgo can teach your child important lessons about money. How well he does, however, depends on many things. Just as in other areas of behavior,

his money ways are related to his age, experience, kind of personality, and values. Also, of course, you will have to apply the principles of parent leadership we have talked about before. This includes setting a good example to your child by the way you handle money.

### Family income and family happiness

Although your child needs some money of his own and some of the things that money can buy, family happiness does not depend on having a large income. Money and things will not take the place of warm, close feelings. One child complained wistfully, "My father gives me everything I ask for but I hardly ever see him. I want my Dad more than my bike."

Here, again, it is a matter of balance. Our modern world offers such a tempting array of things for home and family that conscientious parents can find themselves carried away in a scramble of money-earning in order to give their children "the best in life."

Money helps, of course. But, within limits. If a family has enough to eat and wear and a place to live, more money and more things do not add up to more real happiness. Families can stretch their money if they stretch the imagination and skill of their members. A creative approach to homemaking and plenty of do-it-yourself activities can provide a richer environment and delightful memories for both children and parents.

Real poverty, of course, hurts children and parents. But families who get along with few luxuries are not injured by this fact. Unless, of course, the parents believe that they and their children cannot be happy without them.

How you feel about money and how well you handle it is more important than how much you have.

### What about working mothers?

You may already be a "working mother." Or you may be considering a job. More and more mothers are taking outside employment. This is not necessarily a bad idea, but it isn't necessarily good, either.

Children whose mothers work may get along just as well as children whose mothers do not work, if a reliable, well-trained, and kindly person is in the home to care for them while mother is away. It is also important that all the members of the family are in favor of mother's holding a job. Experts who have studied this subject have not found any clear connection between delinquency, poor school work, or other aspects of children's adjustment and the fact that their mothers do or do not work.

However, if you are forced to go to work against your better judgment (because you must earn money, for instance), and you continue to feel angry or worried about this, it may have a bad effect on your youngsters. If you are unhappy in your job, your unhappiness can affect the way you get along with your sons and daughters. On the other hand, if you enjoy your work, your sense of contentment can make home life pleasanter for everyone. Some mothers, however, who like their work, may feel guilty because they enjoy it so much. Neighbors and relatives, for instance, may criticize them for not staying at home "where they belong." When mothers feel guilty, this, too, can cause upsets in the children.

Quite naturally, a husband's attitude about his wife's work is important. When wives take jobs against their husbands' wishes, or against their own wishes, trouble is apt to flare up on the home front. Ideally, husbands and wives should talk together about what both think is the best plan.

The question of substitute care for the children is a number one consideration. Common sense and expert opinion point to the importance of good supervision for six- to twelve-year-olds when they are out of school. A safe, dependable plan is necessary, such as employing a kindly, responsible adult to always be with the youngsters when the parents are not at home.

Such adults are not always easy to find—or pay for. If this is true in your case and you would like to work, perhaps you can get part-time employment for the hours that your children are in school.

Day care centers for children of working mothers are available in some communities. Although most of the centers put their emphasis on care for preschool children, some run after-school and summer programs for older ones.

Some husbands and wives arrange their jobs so that one parent or the other is always at home. This can be a good arrangement. On the other hand, if both hold full-time jobs at different hours of the day or night, they find that, as a couple, they have far too little time together.

If you are thinking about whether it pays to go to work, you will want to think about extra costs such as those of child care, transportation, working clothes, extra taxes, possibly more expensive, quick-cooking food, and more automatic household equipment. Balance this against what you will earn. How does it all add up?

Then, there is the cost of not having so much time to enjoy your children. These middle years of childhood are, after all, few in number. When your youngsters become teen-agers, they probably will be at home much less than they are now. If you don't have to work full-time now, you might find it better, from every point of view, to stay at home either full or half-time during what is, actually, a short period of your life. If you are like most mothers, you will be less than forty when your youngest child is in high school. Then, you may still have twenty-five years to be a working mother and grandmother.

Fathers, too, are faced with job decisions and how their employment affects the family. Some fathers, eager to be good family supporters, work overtime day after day or take two jobs. Since fathers are important family members, husbands and wives will want to think seriously together about whether having more time with father or more dollars will bring the most happiness to everyone in the family.

## chapter 11

# YOUR CHILD IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD

### Good—and not so good—friends

Although your particular child will approach his social life in his own way, people outside his family will become more important to him as he gets older. He will probably become more deeply attached to best friends, and be more selective about them.

Your six- to eight-year-old is most likely to select his friends from the immediate neighborhood. As his interests and acquaintanceships expand, he may choose his pals from his school or club groups—friends who live miles away from your home. You may feel concerned because you don't know their parents. If your child feels strongly about wanting to spend time with this far-away pal, it may be wise to arrange get-acquainted visits between the two families.

It is sometimes hard to realize how much these childhood friendships can mean to your child.

In time, however, one child may stand out because it seems as if every time he and your child play together, explosions occur. It is natural, under such circumstances, for you to decide that this companion should be barred. This may or may not cure the problem. Your child may be just as mischief prone as his friend. Children are rarely made bad by bad companions. Their own trouble-making capacities may be sparked by some child, but rarely are they caused by another youngster. If your child frequently gets into difficulties when he plays with a certain friend, you may find that you can shield them both by seeing to it that they have plenty



of approved, but exciting, things to do. Many young mischief-makers are merely highly active, imaginative youngsters.

### Guiding your child and his friends

You will need to spell out some ground-rules regarding activities for your child and his companions and see to it that these rules are obeyed. If you can do this with a calm, light, friendly touch, you are apt to be especially successful in keeping their goodwill as well as holding their behavior within bounds.

Being a good supervisor of youthful activities does not always turn the trick. It is likely that in your neighborhood, as in most, you will have at least one youngster who always seems to stir up trouble. When another child's behavior is extremely troublesome, you may decide that you simply must forbid your child to play with him. Often, however, your child, of his own accord, decides that this difficult youngster is simply not for him.

If you feel that a particular child is behaving badly because he has certain kinds of problems rather than because he wants to be bad, it may seem cruel to ban him from friendship with your youngster. However a really difficult boy or girl needs the help of trained specialists. In extreme cases, you may be forced to keep seriously unmanageable youngsters away from your own.

Your child learns much about how to be a boy, or a girl, from his friends. Before your child is eight, he is apt to play happily in a group of boys or girls. After the age of eight, however, it is sometimes hard to believe that boys and girls have any feeling at all for the opposite sex other than one of scorn.

This seeming scorn for the opposite sex is more likely to be a beginning attraction between boys and girls. Since they don't know what to do about this new turn in their lives, they escape to the familiar comfort of their own sex where they can freely talk about the mysteries of the other. With their own sex, moreover, they can practice the arts of making and losing friends without losing too much of their pride in the bargain.

If your child prefers playing with members of the opposite sex, this may be perfectly natural behavior. He, or she, may live in a neighborhood that is mostly one sex, so far as youngsters are concerned. Your athletic little girl may have more need for exercise than is true of most other little girls. Perhaps at this particular time she has interests which are more like those of boys than of girls. Or, perhaps she worships an older brother whom she wants to imitate. However, if your daughter seems to deeply resent being a girl (or your son, being a boy), you may wish to consult a child guidance expert.

Although eight- to twelve-year-old boys generally play with boys, and girls with girls, most of them cherish a special fondness for a particular member of the opposite sex. This fondness is often kept as a secret from parents and other adults, especially when youngsters get to be nine or so.

Your child has a lot to learn about how to get along with the opposite sex. Through his day-by-day work and play with both boys and girls, he is slowly gaining knowledge that will help him during the dating, courtship, and marriage days that lie in the future.

### Many kinds of friends

Friends give other lessons, too. From them, your child learns that friends can be friends and still have many different ideas and customs. Your child and his companions are apt to explore a host of subjects together: school, parents, do's and don'ts, likes and dislikes, God, food preferences, fears, wishes, and so on. Together, they explore the whole range of life as they know and wonder about it.

### Being like—and unlike—the group

Doing what everybody else does is likely to get more popular with your child with every passing month. Fathers and mothers need to think through together what their standards are for themselves and their child. As parents consider these standards, they will find it helpful to decide what values are of basic importance and what ones can be changed a bit.

## Parents can work together to guide children's groups

Your job of setting rules for your child will be much easier if you get together with other parents and, through discussion, work out a behavior code. Some schools foster such action through parent-teacher organizations. In many instances, children, themselves, should be brought into the discussion.

Although adults should have the last word in making rules for six- to twelve-year-olds, youngsters appreciate putting in some words of their own. They are much more likely to see the justice and wisdom of adult guidance if they are given a chance to give their side of the story.

### Sometimes you have to take a solo stand

However, you may have tried, without success, to work with other parents in setting up guides for children's groups. When, for one reason or another, this approach does not bring results, you may have to say to your child, "Regardless of what 'everyone else does,' I can't let you go with the group. You are not 'everyone.' You belong to our family and we don't believe that the group is right." Stands like this are hard to take—hard on you and hard on your child. In the long run, it is likely that you and your youngster will gain a sturdier self-respect and self-confidence if you have the courage to stand up—alone, if need be—for what you believe to be right.

### But how about popularity?

It is easy to carry concern over "group adjustment" too far. Particularly before your child reaches age ten or eleven, group membership is likely to shift from week to week. He may go through a bewildering series of ups and downs with his group. He might, for instance, be thrown out of the Explorer's Club one week, and be elected president the next.

However, being left out of the group is not always this simple. For example, a child who has many personal difficulties may be disliked by other youngsters. Simply belonging to a group is not apt to solve his problems. In many cases, a

child has to get right with himself before he can get right with the group.

Being outside the group, on the other hand, doesn't necessarily mean your youngster has personal difficulties. Sometimes the group, not your child, has the problems. For instance, a group built on prejudice against people of other races, religions, and nationalities is one which you would not want your child to join. Then, too, some groups of children band together to cause trouble in the school or neighborhood.

### **Your child's future doesn't depend on his popularity**

All in all, group membership and popularity can be bought at too high a price. Contrary to frequently held beliefs, the popular youngster does not always become the successful adult. The question may be: successful at what? Certain kinds of jobs (as in some businesses) demand that a person develop qualities of being generally well-liked and hailed as a leader. Many other jobs, however, require other qualities, such as being particularly skilled in a certain field. Being successful in marriage and parenthood probably has very little, if any, relationship to being popular.

### **What popular children are like**

None of this is meant to say that popularity is wrong. Our society does need popular leaders as well as other kinds of people. The qualities which make a youngster popular in the first grade also appear to make him popular in the sixth and on into high school. Popular children are often healthy, friendly, affectionate, easygoing, cooperative, and full of energy. They also seem to be especially able to see quickly what members of the group desire and to behave accordingly. Youngsters of this kind can easily adapt themselves to whatever group they find themselves a part of.

### **Some children like to be loners**

Your child may enjoy this kind of life, but then, again, he may not. Some perfectly well-adjusted youngsters prefer to stay by themselves for the most part or with one or two close

friends. This is sometimes true of especially bright or creative children who are busy with their own ideas and activities. They may not want to give these up for the sake of "belonging."

Some children choose to be by themselves or with a few people partly because they feel overwhelmed by a large group. Even though some youngsters are "loners" by choice, others are made unhappy by their troubles in making and keeping friends. If this is true of your child, he may need your help. Although you can't make his friends for him, you may be able to give him a boost up the friendship ladder. A lot depends on what causes his lonesome state.

### Helping the unhappy, shy child

Some children lack friends because they are shy. Shyness is more common with six- or seven-year-olds than with older children and more common with girls than boys. Shyness sometimes comes about from lack of practice in building friendships or from moving into a new school or neighborhood. Such "skin-deep" shyness is apt to wear off after a child has been around other youngsters a while, particularly if parents and teachers help him feel at ease with others boys and girls.

One way to help your child with this surface shyness is to encourage him to give a party. In general, small, simple parties lasting no longer than a few hours are best for six- to twelve-year-old children. This is particularly true for shy ones. Simple, outdoor parties, such as picnics, often work the best.

### The right clothes and manners may help

It is also a good idea, in general, and at party time in particular, to give your youngster some guidance on dress and manners. Although these things are not of first importance in making friends, they can smooth your child's way in social life. When you teach him about the right things to wear, check on where he is going.

Nearly all children want to look pretty much like the others in their group. This is true of shy youngsters and especially true of older ones. Most girls care more about how

they look than most boys do. Within the limits of your pocketbook and your own standards, you may be able to boost your child's self-confidence by paying attention to what other youngsters wear and getting generally similar clothes for him. Let him do some of the choosing—under your guidance, of course.

### **Being good at games helps, too**

Another way to reduce your child's shyness is to give him a chance to develop skill in games which are popular with other youngsters. You can, generally, find out what games are the thing in your area simply by keeping your eyes and ears open. Naturally, you wouldn't force your child through a series of lessons in the various sports. Nor would you count on skills of this kind to make him a social whiz.

Unfortunately, shyness is not always cured by surface changes. Some youngsters remain basically timid. If this seems to be true of your youngster, and if he appears to be unhappy about the situation, you may find other approaches that help.

Perhaps he needs more opportunities to talk over his feelings with you. Perhaps he needs more praise and affection. Perhaps, without realizing it, you have been a bit too strict with your discipline or have set overly high standards for him. This can make him feel as if he never will amount to very much.

### **Children who fight**

It is not unusual for your child to get into quarrels with other children. Small storms frequently occur when children play. Battles are apt to be intense, wild, and brief. This is part of your child's strenuous effort to learn to live with other people without giving up too much of what he is and wants.

Six- to twelve-year-olds are apt to lose their tempers easily and the younger they are, the more this is likely to be true. Temper-holding and quarrel-settling by reasonable conversation are slowly acquired arts. Your child will probably grow in this ability over the years. He will develop it partly through natural growth and partly by experience. The experi-

ence of fighting and suffering the consequences of his quarrels may teach him a bit about the virtues of self-control.

It helps to accept occasional blowups as part of childish social life. If you take these blowups calmly, your youngster is more apt to do his share of quarreling and peacemaking without getting too upset.

### **Children who fight too much**

On the other hand, some youngsters seem to get into a fight almost every time they play with other children. Some, in fact, declare war at the drop of a marble or jump rope. They seem to be looking for trouble and have no trouble in finding it.

Children like this may have learned far too little about the importance of self-control. If you have a chronic fighter in your family, it is possible you have been a little too easygoing in letting him express his feelings. Perhaps he might benefit from firmer discipline. Now that he is getting older, he may need somewhat higher standards of peaceable behavior set for him.

Some quarrelsome youngsters, on the other hand, are reacting to too much strict discipline without enough outlets for their emotions. This is especially true if they are punished often and severely and especially if this punishment is the off-again, on-again variety. Some children react to this kind of punishment by becoming confused and angry. An angry child may look for a chance to punish other youngsters.

Keeping angry feelings under control is harder for some people than for others. If your child has many violent quarrels at home, school, and in the neighborhood and if he shows little or no improvement in this matter, it may be wise to get the help of a child guidance specialist.

### **Most children like to be club members**

When your youngster comes racing into the house, aglow with the excitement of "our gang has a club," you will know he has reached another mile-post on his journey toward becoming an adult. You may be invited to come see the marvelous "hideout" which the club members are building. It

probably won't look like very much to you. But it seems splendid to him.

One such "clubhouse" bore a somewhat wobbly sign, boldly painted with a skull and crossbones and this inscription: "Friendship Club. Keep Out."

Despite the fact that these clubs can get to be a nuisance, absorbing your child's time, interests, and your household equipment, you will want to give him freedom to be an active member. He is learning many lessons in how to take part in group life.

But, since your young citizen still is inexperienced, you will, naturally, keep ears and eyes open as to what the club is up to. As in all areas of parenthood, "freedom within limits" is the motto to remember.



## chapter 12

# YOUR CHILD IN THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Many organizations have sprung up throughout the country to meet the needs of children for group membership. You are probably familiar with many of them: Boy and Girl Scouts, YM and YWCA's, Community Centers, 4-H Clubs, Boys' and Girls' Clubs of America, Camp Fire Girls, Catholic Youth Organization, and so on.

The majority of youngsters who participate enjoy and benefit from these organizations because they are based on an understanding of children, their interests, and their needs.

No one organization is necessarily better for your child than another. Your child may, or may not, find satisfaction and an opportunity for growth in a particular organization. Let him try out different groups and find out himself what works best for him.

Of course, you may have to encourage him to give whatever he tries a fair trial. He can hardly tell from one Boy Scout meeting, for instance, that he does or does not like this organization. Shy children, particularly, may benefit from making a number of tries at fitting into a club. As they feel more at home in a group, they are apt to like it better.

On the other hand, you may have a youthful joiner who needs to be discouraged a bit from overdoing his memberships. Your young "organization man" may need your help in facing up to the fact that there is only one of him and he has only twenty-four hours in a day and seven days in a week.

It is a good idea not to stress badges and rewards too much. Some youth groups and camps build their programs around competition. This is an easy way to keep children

active. But children can get pretty anxious over the pressure to come out on top. Learning to swim, tie knots, cook, pitch a tent, name birds, and apply first aid are fine accomplishments in and of themselves. Such learning is apt to soak in deeper and last longer when the reward lies mostly in the joy of knowing and doing.

Many physicians, psychologists, and other experts warn against the highly competitive nature of many organizations sponsoring such games as baseball or football for young boys. They believe that young boys lack the physical and emotional strength to readily bear the severe strains put on them by such extreme competition. While many agree that active team sports are excellent for most young boys and girls, they advise that play for the sake of play is to be preferred.

### **Learning from leaders**

One of the finest rewards that your child can get out of his organization is the opportunity he may have to meet fine adult leaders. Your child learns how to be a grown man or woman mostly from you. But other adults he knows well also can set an important example to him. This is the chief reason why all adults who work with youngsters should be mature, kindly, responsible people as well as people who have specific knowledge and skills.

### **How about "extra" lessons?**

As your child's interests and abilities expand, he may want to join classes outside his regular school program. This can be overdone.

Some youngsters, for instance, have quite enough to do in keeping up with their schoolwork and their home and community life. If your child is not the especially energetic or highly active kind, or if schoolwork does not come easily to him, extra lessons might prove a burden.

It is easy in these times to plan too busy a program for your growing child. He should have a chance to be himself—to sit and dream, to do his own explorations and experiments, to forget the clock so that he can have time to remember who he is. As many experiences come his way, he

needs the freedom to weave them into the fabric that is his own special design for living.

### **Learning to use the library**

Use of the library is a fine way to enrich your child's life. It is not possible, or even practical, for parents to provide a child with every book that might interest him. Thanks to libraries, this isn't necessary. Nearly all communities have a free library, though some of the smaller towns have traveling ones. If your community does not have a free library of any kind, or if you think yours is inadequate, you may wish to join with other citizens to see what you can do about this.

When you take your child to the library, you may feel strongly tempted to choose his books for him. Although it is fine to give him suggestions, remember that part of the joy of going to a library is browsing through the books and choosing some for yourself. Since your youngster may end up with a selection that is not satisfying to him (too advanced books, for instance), you may want to seek the librarian's help.

See to it that your child knows and obeys library rules and that he learns how to take care of books. If your library is not too far from your home, he should, before long, be able to handle the matter of book borrowing—and returning—by himself.

It is best to introduce your child to the joys of reading without insisting that he and books become daily companions. Each child learns in his own special way. Books may be especially good for some children and not so much so for others.

### **How about those long summer holidays?**

Although added activities may be too much of a good thing during the school year, summer vacation can be quite another matter.

If your child is like most, he simply has to move and, much of the time, at a fast, complicated pace, in the company of others near his own age. Whatever plans you and your child make for the summer, chances are that you do need to plan. It is important to provide safe and rewarding outlets for his long vacation period.

### Community playgrounds or day camps?

Some communities run free or low-cost, all-day recreation programs for children. How good these are depends mostly on the quality of their leadership.

Good day camp or playground leaders like and understand children and have training in such skills as sports, music, arts and crafts, games, and dramatics. At least one staff member should have training in first-aid. All staff members should be responsible people who can control their own feelings and behavior. Senior leaders should be at least eighteen years old, and it is probably best to have at least one leader for every twenty to twenty-five children.

As in the case of other club programs for youngsters, the better recreation centers put their emphasis on a good time for every child rather than on competitions and rewards.

Although the staff and program of a day camp or playground are more important than its location and equipment, this doesn't mean, of course, that you simply overlook what the place looks like. Certainly children need a big play area so they can run without running into each other. They need safe drinking water, sanitary toilets, and a shelter from the rain and hot sun. Swings, slides, sand boxes, seesaws, jungle-gyms, baseball and basketball areas are familiar playground needs. Many recreation specialists also recommend some of the newer playground supplies, such as huge blocks, which stimulate a child's imagination. Then, too, crafts supplies and musical instruments enrich a playground program.

Some playgrounds include wading and swimming pools. When this is so, it is essential to have qualified lifeguards on duty. Adult leaders also have to give safety supervision when children play on other equipment, especially swings, ladders, and slides.

If your community does not have a good day camp or summer recreation center, you may want to join with other parents in asking your city or county government to provide one. Some public centers of this kind partly finance themselves by small fees paid by the users. Also, some states provide part of the cost of financing local recreation programs.

These summer programs may also be organized and financed by such youth organizations as the Scouts, church

groups, 4-H Clubs, and so on. Sometimes, adult organizations, such as men's and women's clubs, plan and pay for children's recreation projects.

### Overnight camps

Going away to camp can be a wonderful experience for your youngster. But, again, it depends on what kind of camp and on what kind of child. Generally, older youngsters thrive on a chance to leave home for a while and live an active, outdoor life.

For city youngsters particularly, there is a thrill in having the freedom to run across an open field without the fear of traffic, to breathe deeply of air that smells of clover or pine. It is good to feel the sun and wind on bare legs and backs, and to know intimately the beauty and splendid order of the natural world.

Camp may, or may not, be like this for your child. Camps vary tremendously. And so do children. Youngsters below the age of eight are likely to still need the nighttime protection of home and family and probably should be in day programs only.

The American Camping Association has set up basic standards for the staffing, equipment, health and safety provision, and other desirable features of children's camps. If you are choosing a camp for your child, it is probably a good idea to find out whether the one you are thinking about has been approved by this Association. Much of what we have said about day camps applies to overnight ones. Only more so. Safety provisions must be even more adequate and there should be not more than eight or nine children to a counselor. Good camps are not necessarily the expensive ones.

### Your child and his religion

Your child's community life is not all play and social activities, of course. The church or temple may well be one of the most important factors in his total development. It is impossible to discuss religion in a specific way in a booklet of this kind because there are so many different religious groups and religious beliefs in our country. The right of each indi-

vidual to worship or not to worship according to his own beliefs is one of the sacred rights upon which our country is based.

Although you, along with other parents, approach religion in your own individual way, there are a few general principles you may wish to think about.

If your child is like most, perhaps he has already asked you many questions related to religion. And will ask you many more. Such as: "Who made the world?" "What happens when I die?" "Why should I be good?" "What makes a dog, a dog?" "Frank doesn't even pray and he has a better house and more money than I do. How come?" "What exactly is sin?" And so it goes.

As a married pair, you have learned long ago that it is best if you agree on important things like these or, at least, to have reached an agreement to respect your differing points of view. You have also learned that you have to think out what you do believe so you can give clear, honest answers to your child.

You may have found that young minds cannot cope very well with ideas about religion. These ideas have to be put in simple, practical terms. As your child gets older, you can talk to him more and more about the wonders that cannot be seen but can be thought about and felt.

Partly because all of this is hard to deal with, it is a temptation to simply send your child to church or temple and put the whole matter in the hands of an expert. But because you are an active member of your child's health and education team, you can't leave his spiritual life entirely up to the professionals.

Because your youngster tends to model himself after you more than after anyone else, his religious training is not likely to "take" unless you take part in it, too: by living according to the teachings of your religion; by sharing your beliefs with him; by going to church or temple with him; or by worshipping with him in other ways that seem right to you.

Although regular attendance at classes in religious education can play an important part in giving him knowledge about his religion, such attendance does not guarantee that he will act according to religious teachings. Your child, like all of us, needs more than knowledge to guide his behavior.

He needs an inner sense of conviction that certain ways of thinking and behaving are good ways. He needs to feel that he wants to behave in a certain way because he wants to be like the adults he loves and admires.

## chapter 13

# YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

When your child is ready for the first grade, you and he are likely to have many different kinds of feelings. He probably is bursting with excitement at one moment over his great adventure, and a bit frightened about leaving home, the next. You, too, may have mixed feelings of pride and worry.

You know how schools can differ. Some are staffed by teachers who love and believe in children, teachers who are devoted to opening up young minds to the power and excitement of facts and ideas. Some are staffed by teachers who believe that youngsters have to be firmly controlled and pushed through the unpleasant business of numbers, words, rivers, Presidents, and no-running-in-the-halls.

Then, too, each student is different from every other one. All that he has been, is now, and hopes to be sits with him at his desk—his particular feelings about himself, the skills he has learned, his state of health, his special ways of knowing and learning, his rate of growth, his faith, or lack of it, in other people.

You can't do his learning for him, but you can help him in many ways. When you send him off to school after a good night's rest, a healthy breakfast, and a loving goodby, he carries a sense of well-being with him. With your help, he can store up the strength to meet the small victories and defeats that come his way in the schoolroom and on the playground.

There are other, more direct ways you can help him, too.

### Leading your child to learning

You can help your child to feel that learning is important



and satisfying. You can build on his natural urge to explore, to grow, and to develop new skills. At his age, he likes to be busy. He enjoys an increasing sense of strength and independence as he learns to read, to use numbers, and to write. These skills help him master himself and his widening world. If he develops this feeling during his middle years, he will find it easier to settle down to serious work later in life.

### Many experiences increase your child's desire for learning

The more your child knows of his world, the more he is apt to want to learn about it. You can lead him on treasure hunts for new experiences. This hunt might sometimes go no further than your own living room where you sit down and read him a story. As he gets a little older, he can begin to read to you. Children who have experiences like this at home almost always do better work in school than those who don't. Even if you can read together only ten minutes a day, it is likely to make a big difference in his feelings about books and learning.

Not all treasure hunts for knowledge lie in books. One nine-year-old girl and her father sat in their yard on a summer evening. She asked, and he answered, about the Big Dipper and the Milky Way, the half moon that would soon be full, the big stars and the little ones. The little girl slowly mused, "What I wonder is how can there be so much to wonder about."

Family excursions keep your child's sense of wonder alive. There are trips to stores, public buildings, the countryside, and other towns. All of this adds to your child's knowledge and desire for more.

He learns from talking and listening. One reason most youngsters between six and twelve are so eager for a home audience is that they want to practice the new words they are constantly learning. Most of them love riddles, chants, and jokes. They tell long, complicated stories that are partly fact and partly dreams and wishes. Most of them love to hear you tell stories too; about when you were little or about "once upon a time."

Family talk has many values. Talking and listening add to your child's sense of self-confidence. Through home conversa-

tion, he builds up his power to understand and use words. This power is vital to his success in school.

### **Time out for resting**

Your child can have too many rich experiences just as he can get too much rich food. Some youngsters feel that their minds cannot digest all their parents offer. Some feel that they can never live up to what their parents expect. They sometimes lose self-confidence, and may become afraid, worried, or angry. When this happens, learning problems may develop. So try to set standards your child can reach.

### **Parents as model pupils**

One way you can encourage your child to be a good pupil is by being a good student yourself. If you are a reader, this impresses him. If you talk about facts and ideas that interest you, he notes that parents also grow in knowledge.

This may sound like a tall order for busy parents. But, on the other hand, you will find life livelier when you cultivate a few interests of your own. As your child grows older, you may have more time for this.

### **Show him you are interested and proud**

Although your young student will learn how to learn partly by imitating you, he also wants some direct help. Listen to his stories of life at school and look at his papers. It is a good idea to play up what he has done well and play down what isn't so good.

### **Facing up to school problems**

Although your child's self-confidence may be bolstered by your praise, at times school problems can't be overlooked. If he isn't doing good work, you will want to find out what the trouble is.

### **Learning about your young learner**

It is hard to know what you can expect of your child as a

student. Scientists have learned a great deal about the how's and why's of learning over the past fifty years or so, but new knowledge on this subject is still developing. As you seek to understand your young student, here are some things to consider.

### **His health is important**

Your youngster may seem well and still not be in first-rate physical condition. He needs plenty of sleep, exercise, and nourishing food if he is to be alert. It is also important to have his eyes and ears checked carefully.

If your child has signs of illness such as a heavy cold, a fever, or a rash, you will want to check with the doctor about keeping him at home until he is better. He can spread disease as well as become sicker himself if he leaves the house.

### **His rate of growth affects his rate of learning**

Since each person grows at his own individual rate, each child is a bit different from others in a classroom. Because abilities develop at different rates, at one age a child may struggle hopelessly to acquire a certain skill, such as writing. If he is given time to grow, he may acquire it easily when he is a little older.

If your youngster is a "slow developer," he may be eight or nine years old before he is ready to do well in school. A number of youngsters, especially boys, are not ready for such skills as reading until they are about nine. This doesn't mean that such children are less intelligent than others. It can mean that some have grown slowly and that, when their growth "catches up" with them, they may do much better work.

This matter of different rates of growth in children is so important that some experts are now urging that children not start the first grade until they are clearly ready for this experience. This depends on many things, such as physical size, ability to work with a group, capacity to speak fairly clearly, and interest in working with words and numbers.

If your youngster has gone to kindergarten, his teacher may be able to tell you whether he is ready for the first grade. About one-fourth of the first graders today (twice as

many boys as girls) do failing work. Failure is not easy to accept at any time. It is harder to accept when you are a beginner. You may be able to save your child from much unhappiness by giving careful thought to the best time for him to start school. Most children should not begin the first grade before they reach the age of six, and some may do better if they wait until they are a bit older. Some are ready earlier than age six. Whether a child is likely to succeed in first grade depends a great deal on his total growth, not on his exact age. Some schools study each child carefully and advise parents as to when he seems to be ready for the first grade.

In the primary grades, he must learn to read, write, and handle numbers. His further education is built on these skills. If he is having serious trouble with these "tools for learning," you will want to talk to his teacher. Perhaps he needs individual help.

### Intelligence tests

Most schools study each child in a number of ways to find out how to guide him, his parents, and his teachers in making the most of his educational experience.

If your school gives intelligence tests, it is unlikely that you will be given your youngster's exact score. You may be told that he has below average, average, good, or excellent intellectual ability as measured by the test. One reason that schools hesitate to give exact scores is that they can be misleading. Intelligence tests, especially group ones, do not always give accurate results. Also, scores may change from time to time as a child is tested over the years. A good deal may depend on what test is used, how it is given and scored, a child's state of health, and how he feels about himself and school at the time he is tested.

When used carefully by trained persons, intelligence tests may be useful as one of many guides to your child's capacity to learn in school and to understand most school subjects, especially those which are based on reading and the use of words. These tests do not tell much about his special talents. Moreover, children who think in original and creative ways may not do as well on intelligence tests as might be expected.

The special aspects of a child's intelligence are least likely

to be discovered when he is tested as part of a group. If you think your child is not getting all he might from his education and that more should be known about his mental ability, you might be able to arrange for him to have an individual test at school or elsewhere.

Parents often have strong feelings about intelligence and other tests. There is so much pressure today for success in school that it is common for everyone concerned to put too much emphasis on scores and grades. When parents get overly worried about these matters, children are likely to get upset, too. Upset children do not do as well on tests as their intelligence merits, and some do not enjoy or make the most of their education. It is more important for your child to be interested in what he is learning and to experience the joy of knowing than it is for him to get good test scores and honor grades.

### Achievement tests

Your child's measured intelligence is only one guide to his ability to learn in school. Other things, such as his interest in education, his health, and his self-confidence, play a big part in what he can and will do at school.

You can find out a good deal about what your child has learned so far through the scores that he gets on achievement tests. Many schools give these after a child has finished one or several grades. These tests are given in such fields as reading, use of words, number reasoning, and so on. Achievement test scores may be a useful guide as to what kind of individual help your child may need. However, the same warnings given about how intelligence tests are used apply to achievement tests, too.

Your child may need no help at all with his school progress. If he gets average or better scores in achievement tests, all may be well with his education. However, if his measured intelligence is high and his achievement scores are average or below, it's worth trying to find out why. Some very bright children coast along in school because they don't have enough to keep them interested or because standards are not set high enough for them. Some do poorly because their parents push them too hard.

On the other hand, some children get higher marks on

their achievement tests than would seem likely in terms of their measured intelligence. There may be no reason to worry about differences of this sort unless your child seems to be working too hard and is anxiously pushing himself to be a school success.

### **Boys are more apt to have school problems than girls**

The average boy usually has more trouble in school than the average girl. Boys usually develop more slowly than girls, especially in the skills that are particularly valued in school. Six-year-old girls are generally better talkers than six-year-old boys. This tends to make it easier for them to learn to read and write. Also, their small muscles, which are so useful in reading, writing, arts and crafts, tend to be in a more advanced stage than is true for most boys of the same age.

Boys have superior big muscle development and this is fine on the playground.

But in the usual classroom, the boy is apt to feel restless. He also is apt to feel inferior because, in many ways, most of the girls are ahead of him.

In addition, the boy may have a woman teacher who finds it hard to understand some of his masculine drives and behavior.

Boyish resentment is further fanned into flames when the boys are compared with girls or teamed up against them in contests that the males are sure to lose, such as spelling, singing, and reading.

If a boy goes home and is scolded for scoring lower grades than his sister, feelings of inferiority and anger sometimes become unbearable. He concludes that school is for sissies and the athletic field is for "he-men."

If your son has more school problems than your daughter, this probably is not because he is less intelligent. Boys and girls are equal in their intellectual ability. But they are likely to be different in their special strengths and weaknesses. Girls seem to excel in practical details, in accuracy, and in the use of language. Boys often are better at solving problems, especially when these problems involve the use of numbers or when these problems are mechanical in nature. Girls generally like school activities better than boys do and are more at ease with school routines. They may get better marks and are

commonly considered by their teachers as being better behaved.

Some schools plan classroom experiences that particularly appeal to boys. These include such activities as science experiments, building projects, puzzle solving, and so on.

Parents, too, can help. They can, among other things, accept slower progress from their sons, especially in the lower grades and especially in subjects that call for highly developed small muscle skills. They can understand why their sons sometimes feel resentful and discouraged at school.

### Teachers play a big part

Your child's teacher is especially important to him in the lower grades. Before he is eight or nine, he is still apt to be quite dependent on adults. It is hard for him to get along all day without you. His teacher serves partly as a mother or father to him during his school day.

If he loves his teacher, it is usually a compliment to you as well as to him or her. From you he has learned to love grownups—and he is broadening his love to include another adult who is important in his life. This love is good for him in many ways. It makes him want to learn. It also encourages him toward independence and maturity.

It upsets him if home and school are very different. Then he is torn in his loyalties. This is one reason why it is a good idea for you to visit school and work in partnership with his teacher.

As your child moves on to the third or fourth grade, he will probably be less impressed with his teacher and busier with his own age-mates. His teacher is still important to him, but more as an inspiration and an example than as someone to be dependent on and love.

### Getting used to school

Some youngsters react to their beginning months in the first grade with such symptoms as nightmares, stomach aches, and bedwetting. Some seem to get more babyish for a while. Many people—adults as well as children—become more childish under pressure or a trying new situation. If you give your youngster a chance to talk over his feelings about

school, if you see that he has an affectionate, easygoing time at home, and plenty of rest, he will probably soon learn to feel better about himself at school.

When your youngster starts each new grade, he may have a period of unhappiness before he settles down. You can help smooth his way by realizing that some children naturally act like this and by giving him support while he gets used to his new classmates and his teacher.

As he reaches the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, he probably will feel more sure of himself. School often becomes more interesting to him at this time. He has probably mastered some of the basic education tools, and is ready to learn about more ideas and a wider range of facts. His mental abilities have also grown so that he is better able to understand ideas. He is apt to come home each day overflowing with new information.

### Teachers aren't perfect

Teachers, like parents, are human. Like parents, they can get angry or sick or worried. Unlike parents, they have twenty or more children to take care of. Also, unlike parents, they don't have the same deep, personal feelings for each individual child. This has its advantages and disadvantages. Your child's teacher can be calmer than you about your youngster's failures and successes. On the other hand, you have a more personal interest in your particular child than his teacher does.

Parents and teachers sometimes get irritated with each other. If your youngster does poorly in school, no one likes to take the blame. His teacher may find it easier to think you are at fault, while you may prefer to blame the teacher. Your youngster may blame both of you. Probably all three parties—home, school, and child—contribute their share. The problem is likely to get worse unless everyone concerned can get together and try to solve it.

### Talking with your child's teacher

If your child is having trouble, visit his school. It is best to call for an appointment. Some schools set aside special times for parent-teacher conferences.



When you visit, perhaps old fears and resentments from your own school days come sweeping over you. But pull yourself together and meet your child's teacher, person to person.

Think, too, for a moment about how the teacher may feel. Many have vague fears of parents. Enraged parents have been known to stir up principals or other parents. Unfortunately, teachers hardly ever hear from satisfied parents. This is hard on anybody's self-confidence.

You will want to know what the teacher thinks of your child's school work. If it is poor, the teacher should be able to give you some idea as to what is causing the trouble. Perhaps she can make suggestions as to what you can do to help. Try to meet your child's teacher with an open mind and an honest view of your child's behavior—his weaknesses and shortcomings, as well as the qualities you like in him.

If she feels your child behaves badly in class, maybe you can give her some understanding of why he may be "acting up." For instance, a shy child may impress the teacher as being bored. If she realizes he is afraid to speak in a group, she may treat him more gently. An overactive youngster can create a lot of commotion in a classroom. If your child is a "wiggler," maybe his teacher can think of more active things for him to do, such as cleaning the erasers, watering the plants, and so on. If times have been troubled in your home, this can lead to poor marks or difficult school behavior. It is often wise to let your child's teacher know something about home problems so she can be more sympathetic toward your youngster.

There is no one best kind of teacher just as there is no one best kind of parent or student. Some children get along happily with a strict, "no-nonsense" teacher who insists on order, quiet, and plenty of hard work. Others flourish with a gay, more easygoing type.

Sometimes a child can be in serious conflict with a particular teacher. If this happens to your youngster and if talks with him and his teacher seem to do no good, you may find it best to take the problem up with his school principal.

Some schools also have social workers or guidance counselors who are helpful. They may suggest that your child be placed in another classroom. This is worth trying, if it is

possible. For the sake of his education and emotional health, it may be wiser to take him out of a setting where he is miserable.

There may be no way of changing his class. He may have to simply put up with it. You can help him do this by explaining to him why this is necessary and by giving him good experiences at home. Let him know that you sympathize with the hard time he is having, but be firm in saying that he must go to school. Be careful not to blame the teacher too personally and directly; such attitudes can often make the situation more difficult for your youngster. The law requires his attendance and he must have an education.

### How about homework?

Not all elementary schools give homework assignments. Proof is lacking that youngsters of this age necessarily learn more if they have extra lessons to do at home. Some educators believe children should have such lessons only when their work shows they need special practice. Children of this age need considerable time for play and exercise as well as for school work.

However, if your child does have homework, the best way you can help him is to give him a good, quiet place to study and to guide him in planning his time. Be sure he has the tools he needs, such as paper, pencil, ruler, and so on. You may be called on to help him find reference books and other materials. If you find that your child is not understanding his assignments, it is a good idea to ask his teacher how you can help him.

Sometimes homework can trigger a crisis. There's a problem that just can't get solved, the story that isn't written, the test that hasn't been studied for. Your child is in tears or tantrums and you are tempted to rush in to save him. Ideally, you should guide him in getting his work done without doing it yourself. In practical terms, you might have to lend a hand to get him out of a "bad spot."

Teachers say, however, that when parents make a practice of being partners in a child's homework, he is likely to get lazy, irresponsible, or confused.

### New ways in teaching

Most schools have "go-to-school" night. At this time, teachers explain something about how and what they teach. Your school also is likely to have a parent-teachers organization. Find out more about your child's school by visiting it and taking part in activities for parents.

Schools vary so throughout the country that it is impossible to give an exact picture of what goes on in your school. Some of the newer ways in education are discussed here as a general guide.

#### Arithmetic

In many schools, arithmetic is no longer a step-by-step march through adding, subtracting, multiplying, fractions, and percentages.

There are so many different ways used in teaching the "new math" that they cannot be explained here. A number of schools set up special meetings to explain these methods to parents. It appears that these new ways usually are far more effective than the older ones in giving children a real understanding of numbers and their uses.

#### Reading

Reading is also being taught in many new ways. Educators have found that there is no one best method for teaching children to read. Youngsters read well or poorly for different reasons, such as their stage of physical growth, their intelligence, their general health, their eyesight, their special abilities, their life experiences, and their feelings about themselves and school.

All children learn best when they have some successes in their learning, when they understand what they are doing, and when their studies seem useful and interesting. When these principles are applied to reading, it means among other things that different children learn best from different books. These books should be along the lines of the child's interests. They also should be neither too "hard" nor too "easy" for him because, of course, each youngster does best when he is encouraged, but not pushed to read. It is also important for

him to get the meaning out of his reading. It does no good, for instance, to recognize, pronounce, and spell words correctly if they don't add up to a story or idea that makes sense to him.

### Foreign languages

Foreign languages are taught in some elementary schools today. Children seem to pick up a new language more easily than older people do. Since the opportunities for travel and for work with other countries are growing, it is clear that your child's life will be enriched if he knows at least one language besides his own. And if he starts learning one early, he is more likely to master it.

### Learning through class projects

Teachers know that elementary school youngsters have strong drives to create, to explore, to be active, to be part of a group, and to master real problems. Most learn best when their classwork is built on these needs. This is why some teachers use projects such as parties, plays, and trips as part of the school program.

### Teaching machines

Perhaps your child learns partly through teaching machines. With careful planning by the teacher, these machines can give him a chance to learn certain kinds of facts and ideas on his own. They can give him a chance to check his own work as he goes along and to learn at his own rate. They can free the teacher to work with individuals and small groups or to lead class discussions.

### Team teaching and "master" teachers

Your youngster might have two teachers at once for some of his classes, or he may take part in a large demonstration or lecture given by a "master" teacher, sometimes by way of television. Then, too, he may have a specialized teacher or teachers for different subjects. Some schools teach in these

ways because knowledge is increasing so rapidly that one teacher cannot be an expert in everything.

### Classroom aides

Parents or other adults may serve as assistants to the teacher. Their services may range all the way from helping first-graders with snowsuits to marking papers and keeping records. These "aides" free the teacher to spend all of his time in the task of education.

### Audio-visual aids

Modern education also is built partly on the use of films and records that enrich a child's understanding. Some schools now have tape recorders that teachers can use to make records for the use of small groups or individual students. Children can also use these for practice in speaking.

### Problems aren't always problems

Most youngsters proceed through school at a happy, steady, and fairly successful pace. However, many youngsters are not making the most of their special abilities in school, and many stumble along with unnecessary blocks to their progress. Small problems can grow into big ones if your child is not helped early. While this isn't always true, it is a good idea to listen carefully to both your child and his teachers. It is also wise to work with the total school team to help your young student enjoy and make the most of his education.

### Special services

These school teams may include a number of special "pupil personnel services" set up to serve students as individuals. Your school may have all, some, or a few of the services that are described here.

*Health services.*—Your school probably has a health unit. The doctor who comes to the school may give physical examinations to students once or twice a year, or he may serve as a

medical consultant. Likely, a school nurse is on duty at least during a part of each day. School nurses tend to emergencies and also advise youngsters and their parents on some health and personal problems. They may explain the meaning of illness and the importance of getting help. They may help a teacher in planning a child's school day. Or they may work with the teacher in planning a health education program.

*School social workers.*—The job of the school social worker is to counsel with families on personal matters that can affect a child's school progress. When parents have trouble in getting along with each other, for instance, their unhappiness can upset their children. School social workers can also help with such family problems as illness, unemployment, or lack of money. If the school social worker cannot give direct help to a family, he usually can tell parents where they can find the help they need.

*Guidance counselors.*—Guidance counselors specialize in understanding and helping the child as an individual make the most of his learning abilities. They also help with his personal adjustment to the total school program. Furthermore, these counselors are trained to plan testing programs for a school (such as intelligence and achievement tests) and to explain to teachers, parents, and children what the results of these tests mean.

Because a child's home life, personal feelings, and health all affect how well he does at school, the guidance counselor works in partnership with the parents, the school social worker, the nurse and the teacher. If there is no school social worker, the guidance counselor may help parents and children with their personal problems at home as well as at school.

*School psychologist.*—Some schools have a psychologist on their staff, others share a psychologist with one or more other schools, while others may refer youngsters with special difficulties to a psychologist in the community. The school psychologist studies individual children in terms of their particular abilities and weaknesses, their feelings about themselves and others, their special interests, and so on. If your child seems to be having problems in learning or in classroom be-

havior, the psychologist often can help by working directly with your youngster or in advising what help he particularly needs.

*School psychiatrist.*—Few schools have the funds to employ a full-time psychiatrist, but a number use a psychiatrist on a part-time basis. If there is no psychiatrist on the staff, troubled students may be referred to one in the community. Some communities have free or low-cost mental health or child guidance clinics which are staffed by psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. A small community may have the services of a traveling mental health clinic.

The psychiatrist specializes in helping children who show that they are seriously upset. These upsets usually have no relation to mental illness. They generally suggest that a child has fears and worries that are deeply troubling to him. Since it is far easier to help a troubled child when he is young, it is a wise idea for him to see a psychiatrist if the school recommends this. Or, parents may decide for themselves that their youngster needs help of this kind.

*Remedial reading teachers.*—As in the case of other difficulties, early treatment of reading problems is best. If your child's teacher thinks he needs a remedial reading specialist and there is none in your school or through the board of education, you may find one in your community. A remedial reading specialist is trained to help a youngster develop the particular reading skills he lacks and to understand why he has had trouble in learning to read in the first place.

*Speech therapist.*—Speech problems may be caused by many things, including poor hearing, slow development, emotional upsets, and lack of practice. Since many speech problems can be cleared up with special treatment, some schools have speech therapists. Your child's teacher could probably tell you whether your youngster needs the attention of a speech specialist.

*Parent education groups.*—A number of schools sponsor lectures and discussion groups for parents. These may be run by a parent-teacher organization, by the school, or by a group of interested parents. Such groups usually work best if both

mothers and fathers are included, if there is considerable group discussion, and if some of the excellent films, plays, and publications on child development and family life are used.

### Growing toward adolescence

The years from six to twelve have been incredibly busy ones—full of the hundreds of tasks that you, as responsible parents, have performed in your child's behalf. But now these six years are over, and they seem to have gone by in a flash. With a grateful, if somewhat anxious, heart you look forward to the challenging years ahead.

These next years are likely to be smoother and happier for you and your son or daughter if you help your child gradually slide, rather than explode, into adolescence. This gradual approach comes about more readily if you understand and work with, rather than against, your child's growth. Your youngster will not become a different person as he moves toward adolescence, even though scare stories about "wild teen-agers out of control" might make you think so. Pat or Patty are the the same people you have known right along—they simply develop a fancier or freer way of being their more grownup selves.

As they move toward youth and away from childhood, you will find your job as a parent easier in some ways and harder in others. As one parent of adolescents said, "It is easier on the feet and harder on the feelings." Your feelings, and theirs, will be less strained if you give them the chance to grow, step by step, into increasing independence and responsibility, and if you bear in mind that your preadolescent is your special son or daughter at another special stage of growth.



## appendices

# **SPECIAL CONCERNS OF PARENTS REGARDING PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

Most of this book has been devoted to the growth and development of normal children in average families. It has not dealt with special problems of particular children because most parents cannot handle these without the help of professionally trained specialists. While reading about serious problems of children may help you decide whether or not your child does have a severe difficulty, a book cannot lead you to the effective treatment of such difficulties. For this, you need a professionally trained specialist or a team of specialists. In order to help you decide whether or not your child may have a serious physical or emotional problem which requires specialized treatment, we present a brief guide in the following pages to various kinds of difficulties which are fairly common in six- to twelve-year-olds.

## **EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

Since children often have more trouble than adults in knowing what is bothering them—and in talking about some of their troubles—they are more apt to express their emotional upsets through the way they behave than through what they say.

As you read the list of behavior symptoms that may show that your child has a serious emotional problem, you may become quite alarmed. But the signs of serious difficulties may also be signs of temporary upsets. Most children have

some symptoms of emotional problems some of the time. This doesn't necessarily mean that they have severe, long-lasting difficulties. They may be reacting only to a short-time strain, such as a new baby in the family or a move to a different neighborhood, or to something that has happened that you may not know about.

As you think about whether or not your youngster may have a serious problem, you will find it helpful to ask yourself whether or not he has one or more of the listed symptoms frequently, whether or not he has them in a slight or more extreme form, and whether he is reacting to a passing strain. It is also a good idea to check your observations with such persons as your child's doctor, teachers, and religious leaders.

While it is important not to worry too much about your youngster, it is also important to watch for early signs of trouble. If your child does have serious difficulties, he will be helped most by early treatment of them. Untreated emotional difficulties are likely to get worse, rather than better. Skilled treatment by qualified specialists is just as important as early treatment.

It is hard for most parents to face the possibility that their child may have an emotional problem. There are many reasons for this. For instance, there are the old superstitions that still are quoted to the effect that there is something shameful about emotional problems. Modern science shows that upset feelings are to be understood and treated in much the same way that physical illnesses are to be understood and treated. Although parents may blame themselves more for a child's emotional upsets than for his physical ones, it is important to realize that there are more possible causes for emotional problems. These causes may have little to do with the way the parents have raised the child. Children are born with different ways of reacting to the world around them, and they are exposed to many influences besides those of their parents.

Signs of possible emotional disturbances tend to fall into two major groups. The first group includes those youngsters who are deeply unhappy, frightened, worried, who have guilty feelings, and who tend to handle these feelings by drawing away from the outer world and from other people. Seriously

disturbed youngsters of this kind may behave in one or more of the following ways.

### Severely shy children

The first four groups of behavior patterns listed below are common with very young children; as your child gets older he should be acting in these ways less often:

- Extremely shy, fearful behavior, such as being afraid to make any friends outside the family or being afraid to try even simple new experiences.
- Extreme dislike of being away from parents for even a short time, frequent bedwetting, demands for help from parents in simple tasks, such as dressing, etc.
- Frequent temper tantrums, whining, crying over slight matters.
- Frequent nightmares or sleepwalking.
- Extreme, continued confusion over what is imagined and what is real. If a six- to twelve-year-old child seems to see and hear things that do not exist, if he imagines a number of events that did not happen, he may be in real trouble. If he shows that he can see the difference between what is real and what is make-believe when this is pointed out to him, then he may simply have an active imagination.
- Reacting with panic, over and over again, to a particular object or thing that is not frightening to most people (such as a kitten or a stuffed toy).
- Showing extreme fear of being hurt even in quite safe activities or worrying in a seemingly unreasonable way over possible failure even in simple tasks.
- Absolute insistence on a number of set routines or on extreme order and neatness as well as being anxious to be considered perfect.

- Appearing to be bored, showing little strong feelings, absentmindedness.
- Repeating simple acts over and over again in a way that the child seems unable to control, such as nose picking, thumbsucking, rocking back and forth, nail biting, public masturbation, mouth twisting, hand wringing, and so on.
- Frequent pains, stomach upsets, skin rashes, etc., for which doctors cannot find a physical cause.

### Serious troublemakers

Another group of signs of possible problems are often observed in children who have exceptional difficulty in controlling their angry and destructive feelings. However, these feelings are usually expressed in a roundabout way, so that it is frequently not easy to tell what the child is angry about or who is making him angry. Often, he doesn't know, himself. Children of this kind may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Excessive and frequent fighting, explosive temper tantrums, running away or truanting from school more than a few times.
- Frequent stealing (especially when the stolen objects seem to be of no, or little, worth to the child); frequent lying in a more serious way than simply playing games of make-believe.
- Taking serious risks with his own physical safety; extreme, continuing interest in stories focussed on crime and terror.
- Frequent and noisy use of clearly forbidden swear words and sex talk; a strong and active resistance to persons in authority.
- Serious and frequent destruction of property, fascination with setting fires, cruel treatment of other children or animals, repeated acts of destructive mischief.

Children who frequently show one or more of the above symptoms are often seen by others as being "undisciplined and spoiled." Youngsters who tend to do just about whatever they wish are, indeed, often lacking in discipline. On the other hand, some children, out of their deep, inner unhappiness, act in a violent, destructive, and disobedient way. It sometimes may seem as if they wish to destroy themselves and others.

Here, again, it is important to consider how often a child misbehaves, how serious his misbehavior is, and whether his misbehavior seems to be related only to a passing event which has upset him. Although more firm discipline can often help the child who carelessly disregards rules, it is not likely to help the touchy, irritable youngster who "acts bad because he feels bad." If you have a youngster who frequently gets into serious trouble because he is destructive, rebellious, and so on, it would be a good idea to ask the advice of professionally trained experts who specialize in children's problems.

**Specialists who are trained to help children  
who seem to have emotional problems**

If you think your child has a serious emotional problem, you will want to have him checked first by your doctor. Sometimes, problems which appear to be caused by upset feelings are at least partly caused by physical illnesses or handicaps. Since emotional upsets and physical upsets often go together, it is an ideal arrangement for a team of specialists to work together, such as a doctor, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a social worker. Some hospitals, clinics, and schools have such a team. In some communities, these teams are able to give free or low cost services because they are supported by tax funds or other kinds of community contributions.

If your community does not have a team of specialists that work together, your doctor may refer you to a social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Your doctor is likely to know whether these people have the professional training they should have in order to effectively help your child. You can tell something, yourself, about how much professional training such people have had by finding out whether they belong to their professional associations. These associations set up

standards of education and experience for their members. Among these organizations are the following: the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychological Association, and the American Psychiatric Association. You will want to check on these matters because, in some communities, people who are not adequately trained claim or consider themselves to be qualified to treat emotional problems. Be careful not to seek help from people who are not qualified.

When you have questions or want further information about sources of help for your child, check with your family physician, your local hospital, clinic, health and welfare council, or medical association. You can also write or call your local or State departments of health or of public welfare.

If you do seek treatment for your child's emotional problems, it is very likely that the specialist who is helping him will want to talk to you, too. If you seek help from a group of specialists, at a child guidance or mental health clinic, you may find that different members of the professional team may work with different members of the family. This is partly because an emotionally upset child needs particular understanding from his parents. Also, parents find it helpful to discuss their own worries about an upset child with a trained specialist who understands them as well as the child.

It is comforting to know that these specialists are guided by a code of professional ethics which pledges them to keep everything confidential which children or parents tell them.

## OTHER HANDICAPS

If your child has other special problems, other kinds of specialized help are, of course, needed. It is impossible to discuss all kinds of special difficulties in this book. In the paragraphs below, you will find brief statements about some of the more common kinds of difficulties which affect some children.

### Mental retardation

If a child is mentally retarded, it means his intelligence is considerably less than average. Thus, he cannot learn as fast as other children, nor can he learn as much. Some retarded

children are only mildly handicapped and can get along fairly well at home, at school, and in their community, especially if they are in a special school class for retarded children and if life is kept simple for them at home. Others have more serious handicaps, ranging from being unable to learn school subjects but able to tend to many of their daily needs, to being so retarded that they seem like helpless babies.

Parents who have children of this kind have serious and sad problems to face. With less severely retarded youngsters, a child's handicap may be unknown until he starts having trouble in the first or second grade. If you or your child's teacher think your youngster may be mentally retarded, it is important to have him very carefully studied by a doctor—perhaps a team of doctors—and a psychologist. A child sometimes seems to be dull because he is ill, has physical handicaps, or is emotionally upset. Although your child might seem to be retarded when he is measured by a group intelligence test (such as most schools use), tests of this kind usually cannot show whether a child has a special physical or emotional problem that may have a lot to do with a low intelligence score. There are many causes of mental retardation. Not all of them are known. Very often the cause is not related in any way to the kind of care that parents give a child. The earlier a child gets special help for a problem of this kind, the more likely it is that the help will be effective.

You can learn more about this subject by talking to your doctor.

You can find out about special treatment service for retarded children by talking to your doctor, clinic, school, health and welfare council, local and State departments of health, of public welfare, or education.

### Speech problems

As your child becomes six or seven, his speech should be getting quite clear. Some youngsters, of course, speak well at an earlier age. Of course, your six- to twelve-year-old child will still mispronounce some big words and some new ones as he adds them to his vocabulary. Generally, you can help him speak well simply by talking clearly to him and by listening to what he has to say. If you correct him too often, or in a

harsh or teasing way, he is apt to find it harder to learn to talk well.

Stuttering is a common difficulty with many youngsters. It sometimes comes about because they have so much more to say than time or skill to get it said. Emotional tension and special attention drawn to a child's stuttering are apt to make it worse. Boys, with their slower development and greater pressures for success, are more likely to stutter than girls. If your child does stutter a good deal and does not seem to be improving, it is an excellent idea to have his hearing tested and perhaps he should see a speech therapist. Many schools employ speech and hearing specialists. Some communities also have speech and hearing centers. Ask your school and doctor about the programs in your own community.

Other speech problems may also suggest that your child is hard of hearing. Tremendous progress has been made in recent years in specialized hearing tests for youngsters. Many schools today give such tests. If your school does not have such a service, ask your doctor about this. Especially in the case of children who are only slightly deaf, it is difficult to know without these tests whether or not he does have a hearing problem—and if so, what kind. Modern hearing aids and special treatment can be of important help to the child who is deaf.

### Problems of vision

If your child is blind, you and he surely have a particularly difficult problem. You will need the special services that most States offer. Ask your doctor about this. You may also find it helpful to get in touch with your local or State departments of health or of public welfare.

Fortunately, very few youngsters are blind. Many, however, have imperfect vision. Improved tests of children's eyesight show that even among six- or seven-year-olds, a large percentage have slight or more serious problems in seeing. Since good vision is so important to your six- to twelve-year-old, especially in his school work, you will want to have him carefully checked in this matter. Even slight problems in eyesight can affect your child's ability to read well. Perhaps



he will be tested in school. If not, talk the matter over with your child's doctor.

## DISEASES AND OTHER DISORDERS

### Allergies

What are they? When a person is sensitive to a normally harmless substance, he has an allergy. If he receives more of this substance than he can stand, he will show an allergic reaction. An allergy may look like a cold, an upset stomach, a skin disease, or a number of other disorders.

There is such a variety of allergic reactions that a series of tests are usually necessary to find the cause of trouble. Emotional tension may often play a part in causing increasing allergic problems. Allergies are not infections and cannot be "caught" or given to anyone else. While seldom fatal, they cause discomfort and inconvenience—mild to severe—and can lead to infections.

If your child has an allergy, he should be under the care of a doctor who will, by means of tests, trial diets, and changes in environment, find out and, in most cases, control what your youngster is sensitive to.

Four of the common kinds of allergic reactions are asthma, hay fever, eczema, and hives.

*Asthma* narrows the air passages and produces mucus so that it is hard to breathe. A child with asthma wheezes and coughs in an alarming way. It may be worse when he lies down, and so he has to sleep propped up. Attacks frequently occur at night, and they often change with the season of the year. Sometimes a cold precedes an asthmatic attack.

*Hay fever* resembles the common cold, with sneezing, itching and weeping eyes, and a "stuffed up" head caused by swelling of the membranes of the nose. It is usually caused by pollens of weeds, grasses, and trees and, therefore, unlike a cold, usually comes only at regular seasons of the year.

*Eczema* is a red, thickened rough patch on the skin, frequently on the cheeks, folds of skin at the elbow and behind

the knee. It will itch, and scratching causes oozing which forms crusts. While it is not contagious, the open sores may readily become infected.

*Hives* raise welts on the skin which resemble large mosquito bites. They usually appear and disappear suddenly. A child who itches from hives can be made more comfortable by applying ice to the welts, or by giving him a warm soda bath (one cup of baking soda for a small tub).

### A child who is underpar

If your child tires quickly, is pale and listless and lacks energy, something is probably wrong although no sign of acute illness develops. Chronic ill health and lack of vitality have various causes. Until you know the source, you can't effectively treat the condition. Don't buy special foods and tonics. Instead, take your child to your doctor for a physical checkup.

The child who lacks energy and seems run down may be suffering from:

*A chronic infection* which drains him of vitality.

*Lack of sufficient rest.* Slow down the pace of your child's day, plan a midday rest for him, and arrange an earlier bedtime. It may do wonders for him, and you, too!

*Anemia* (lack of sufficient red blood cells) may occur when a child's diet is faulty, when he loses a great deal of blood, or has had a severe illness. Unless the loss of blood is severe, he will build new red blood cells in time. However, the doctor may feel that a transfusion of whole blood is necessary to replenish the supply quickly. Or the doctor may prescribe iron as a medicine. Otherwise, good general care is all that is needed, with special emphasis on foods rich in iron, such as meats (especially liver, kidney, and heart), egg yolk, green leafy vegetables, whole grain and enriched bread and cereals, molasses, raisins and certain other dried fruits such as apricots, prunes, and figs. Foods rich in vitamin C, such as oranges and tomatoes, are also important.

Anemia may also be caused by disease which destroys the

blood or by an inherited condition. In each case, the cause will determine the treatment.

**Poor nourishment.** In some instances, a child is run down because the food he eats fails to supply his body with energy and the building substances he needs. If he receives a faulty diet, correct this by offering foods from the list on pages 62-63. In rare instances, a child's body cannot make proper use of the foods it takes in. Your doctor will have to prescribe for such a condition.

Some children who appear to be underpar may be naturally less energetic than others. Then, too, a pale, listless child may be hampered by an emotional problem.

### Problems of overweight

Many youngsters tend to be overweight mostly because they eat too many high calorie foods. It is generally best to let your doctor decide whether or not your youngster is overweight, since each child has his own kind of body build. Some youngsters who may appear to be overweight merely have large bones and heavy muscles.

It looks more and more as if some youngsters are overweight mainly because of the ways in which their bodies handle the food they eat—not necessarily because they eat too much. These matters can be very complicated, and it is a good idea to try to see a doctor who specializes in problems of overweight children if your child has serious difficulties along this line and fails to lose weight with a slimming diet.

For losing weight is not always a simple matter of eating the right foods and avoiding the wrong ones. A child may tend to put on weight for a variety of other reasons, including the possibility that his glands may fail to work as they should. Perhaps he doesn't exercise enough or perhaps he is emotionally upset. Some children who feel inferior, unhappy, and unloved turn to food for satisfaction. Even though they know they are overeating and even though they want to lose weight, they may not be able to cut down on their food intake. This can be quite a complicated problem, so much so that your doctor may recommend that you consult a child guidance specialist.

### Coughs and colds

During the early school years, children seem to get a discouraging number of coughs and colds and sore throats, though perhaps not so many as when they were younger. There are many possibilities: croup, aching or running ears, flu, swollen glands, and so on. Some are named for the part involved: laryngitis, tonsillitis, adenoiditis, bronchitis, pharyngitis. Many mothers feel as if they can name them all. It is some help to know that the child will be less susceptible to them as he grows older and will have a less severe reaction to those he does get.

At the beginning of these childhood maladies, you never know what you're dealing with. What looks at first like a simple runny nose may in a day or two become a more complicated illness, such as measles. It may be the first sign of a more serious infection. Many times, children produce their own typical response to infection. One will get croup every time. Another never does, but screams with an earache.

About all you can do is decide that every cold and cough and sore throat deserves the safest treatment. Check with the doctor and keep in touch with him as symptoms change. He will decide whether he needs to see your child. In this way, you are likely to avoid complications which can result when a slight infection opens the way for a more serious one. Keep your youngster indoors, and in bed if he has a fever. Providing him with plenty of loving care is especially important when he is ill.

### Other respiratory infections and complications

*Diphtheria*, a serious disease, can be avoided. A child who has received 3 injections in infancy, and booster shots on schedule, has practically no chance of catching it. It begins with sore throat and fever; hoarseness and sharp cough may develop. The throat and tonsils may become whitish in appearance. If a child who has not been immunized is exposed to diphtheria, the doctor will give him antitoxin immediately in an effort to prevent the disease.

A sore throat caused by a streptococcus is called a "*strep throat*" or, if a rash is present, *scarlet fever*. Be sure to continue the medicine the doctor advises for the full period he prescribes even though the symptoms clear up quickly. To avoid later complications, it should be continued for the full course of treatment.

A sore throat that gets out of bounds may lead to complications elsewhere in the body. *Rheumatic fever* is one such complication. This is a serious disease because it can affect the heart. School-aged children are apt to be affected.

Rheumatic fever takes on different forms. It may be deceptively mild—simply a low recurrent fever—or acute with pain and swelling in the joints. It tends to recur again and again, so take seriously the first attack, however mild. Furthermore, the mildness of the symptoms bears no relation to the damage it can cause. The doctor can guide you in ways to ward off further attacks, and may prescribe regular preventive doses of medicine.

A doctor needs to check any child who complains of aching legs or mild joint pains, who is pale and tired, or who has slight fever for more than a few days without obvious cause.

*Chorea*, or *St. Vitus Dance*, may be a symptom of rheumatic fever. The child has jerky movements of face, arms, trunk, or legs which may vary each time. Don't confuse chorea with the restlessness of a child who's tired of sitting, or with nervous twitches such as eye blinks, head jerks, or other mannerisms which the child repeats. A child with chorea should be under a doctor's care. He needs sympathetic handling at home, too, for he's apt to cry easily and be frustrated by the jerkiness that appears when he wishes to dress or feed himself, pick up small objects, or use a pencil.

Inflammation following a sore throat may center in the kidney, causing *nephritis*. With nephritis, the urine is scanty, dark colored, or bloody. Tell your doctor at once of any change in the amount or color of a child's urine. (See diabetes, vaginitis, pyelitis.)

*Pneumonia* is a general name for inflammation of the lungs and can be caused by a virus, bacteria, or foreign object.

Each type has a different treatment. As a rule, there is fever, cough, and difficult, rapid breathing. Modern drugs bring about prompt recovery in most cases when the treatment is started early. A child with pneumonia may not seem to be very sick, but the disease may last a long time and needs medical supervision throughout.

*Tonsils* and *adenoids* are small, spongy masses of tissue at the back of the throat which are similar in their function to other lymphatic glands in the body, particularly those at the side of the neck, in the armpit and groin. Like these other glands, tonsils and adenoids combat germs; they become involved whenever a child has a cold or throat infection. After repeated respiratory troubles, they may remain so swollen they can interfere with breathing or swallowing. If the situation becomes urgent, the doctor may feel that obstructive tonsils or adenoids should be removed. Nowadays, the operation is never done routinely, in a general attempt to improve the child's health in some vague way. Don't urge your doctor to remove tonsils or adenoids; he'll do it if he's convinced it is necessary.

### Skin and eye infections

Itches and bites and sores on the skin are common with children. Some can spread to other members of the family. Treat any break in the skin with care, since it offers an easy entry for germs. Therefore, try to keep any sore place clean, and discourage a child from scratching even a mosquito bite. If you trim his nails short, it may help to prevent damage if he scratches while asleep.

You'll need the doctor to treat all the following conditions. Using patent medicines may waste time, or cause further irritation. If anyone has a skin disease, be careful to keep his towels, washclothes, linen, and clothing separate from others. Launder them with very hot water and press with a hot iron.

*Athlete's foot* is a fungus infection that usually occurs between the toes where the skin is warm and moist. The medicine you use should be prescribed by a doctor. Keep the child's feet clean and dry. Dust them with a talcum powder. Athlete's foot is most stubborn and prevalent in the summer.

Change socks daily, and air the shoes. Open shoes and sandals may cut down on foot perspiration.

*Cold sores* are uncomfortable blisters on the lip, in the mouth, or on the tongue which generally heal by themselves and respond to simple cleanliness. They do seem to appear in some children when they have colds or other illness. Rinsing with warm water, containing one-half teaspoon of salt or bicarbonate of soda per glass, may provide relief for sores inside the mouth. If the child has fever, complains of a very sore mouth, or has bleeding of the gums, call the physician or dentist. These may be symptoms of "trench mouth" or other infections.

*Conjunctivitis*, often called pinkeye, is an infection caused by a variety of bacteria and/or virus and is extremely contagious. You may be first aware of conjunctivitis when the child awakens with his eyelids glued shut by pus. It readily spreads from one member of the family to another unless extreme care is taken to keep towels, washcloths, and other toilet articles separate.

You can soothe the inflamed eyes with warm compresses, but check with the doctor about treatment. Neglect may damage the child's vision.

A child's eyes and eyelids may become reddened for a variety of reasons. Allergy (see page 123) sometimes causes red or inflamed eyes. Consider the possibility of eyestrain if a child blinks, squints, or is generally irritable. Even very young children can be fitted with glasses.,

*Eczema* and *hives* are discussed under Allergies (page 123).

*Impetigo* is a very contagious skin infection. It usually starts on the face with an itchy blister which oozes pus and crusts over. The child can readily infect others—or other areas of his own body—by carrying germs from the first sore.

Prompt treatment can clear up the infection. See your doctor. If neglected, impetigo spreads rapidly and paves the way for other infections.

*Lice* (pediculosis) are tiny animals which attach themselves to the hair or skin and cause irritation. If the child scratches,

which he's sure to do, the excretion of the lice causes further irritation. Usually, lice or their eggs, called nits, can be seen. The doctor can prescribe a treatment. Often DDT, 5 to 10 percent in talcum powder, is used to destroy lice and their eggs. Keep your child, his clothing, and his bedclothes clean to avoid spread and reinfection of lice.

*Ringworm* is a fungus which may attack the scalp. It heals in the center and spreads outward, resembling a ring. Frequently the hair will break off. It is stubborn and quite contagious. A doctor must treat ringworm.

Sometimes a child wears a tight-fitting skull cap (a stocking is often used) which can be changed frequently and boiled to kill the germs. This prevents the spread of ringworm to others. It has nothing to do with treatment of the infection.

Another form of ringworm causes round, scaly patches on the skin. It is more readily treated. Athlete's foot is another form of ringworm.

*Scabies*, sometimes known as "the itch," is caused by a tiny animal which burrows under the skin to live and lay its eggs. The intense itching is apt to be worse at night, and the child may cause sores as he scratches himself in his sleep.

Your doctor will prescribe a suitable ointment. Apply it after the child is bathed, while the skin is still moist. Bed clothes should be sterilized if scabies is present.

*Styes on the eye* and *boils* are caused by bacteria. Pimples are related infections. Warm, moist dressings or soaks will relieve the pain and help to localize the infection. Do not open a boil or sty. When it erupts, wipe the pus away with a sterile pad. For a boil, apply a sterile cover.

If a child has a series of boils or styes, get advice from the doctor.

### **Stomach, intestinal, and genitourinary disorders**

Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, and abdominal pain are all symptoms of a great number of illnesses which range widely in degree of severity. Eating too much, or eating the wrong foods, may cause vomiting. On the other hand, it may be the first sign of a common childhood disease



or an internal disorder. Stomachache or loose or hard bowel movements may mean anything from an emotional upset to having worms.

Check with the doctor when anything unusual appears. Treatment will vary according to the cause, not the symptoms.

There is seldom any rush about relieving a child who is *constipated*, and routine use of laxatives or enemas is unwise. In fact, they may gravely complicate the situation if the child's appendix is inflamed. Plenty of fluids and fresh fruits and vegetables do no harm. Check with the doctor before giving any medicines.

*Diarrhea* may occur when a child eats some irritating or spoiled food, or if he has a head cold, sore throat, or other infections. It may be an infection known as *enteritis* or *dysentery*. This may be very serious. If the child is vomiting as well, his body can become dehydrated which may threaten his very life. Until you can check with the doctor, keep the child quiet and encourage him to drink liquids frequently.

*Worms* can cause either constipation or diarrhea. Neither may be present, however. Actually seeing worms in the child's bowel movement, or noticing that he seems itchy and irritated around the rectum, may be the first sign of their presence. The common worms of children are pinworms, which appear to be active, white threads about half an inch long, and round worms, which are pale and smooth and about the size of an earthworm. Tapeworms are less common, and hookworms are confined to some regions of the South.

The eggs of worms can be picked up anywhere, so try to keep your child's hands and nails clean.

The doctor will want to see a portion of his bowel movement if he suspects worms. He needs to know exactly which type he is treating. In order to kill worms, the medicine must be strong. Therefore, it must be given in exact dosage and under certain conditions in order that the child himself not be injured.

Cloudy or smoky urine may contain pus, the result of a kidney infection. *Pyelitis* is more common in girls than in boys. The child may seem perfectly well except for the

cloudy urine. In other cases, the child may seem sick, but is without fever or pain, or there may be a headache and low fever. In any case, get a doctor's diagnosis. Take a sample of urine along with you in a clean, small bottle.

*Vaginitis*, a discharge from the vagina (the opening into the female reproductive system), may vary from mild and brief to mild yet persistent, or to thick and profuse. The urine may appear clouded or bloody if it becomes merged with the discharge. The doctor should be consulted to clear up what may be a mild or more serious infection. Occasionally, a girl has pushed some object into her vagina.

### Metabolic disorders

An unusual appearance of bowel movements is one of the signs of *cystic fibrosis*. Large and foul stools may be passed because of poor absorption of fats from the foods the child eats. This disease, which is suffered only by a small number of children, is inherited from parents who carry the trait but usually have no symptoms themselves. Eventually, it disturbs many of the functions of the body. A child with cystic fibrosis is apt to have repeated or chronic lung infections. He usually has a large appetite, but may nevertheless gain weight slowly. Careful and continued supervision by a doctor is necessary.

*Diabetes*. Any change in the child's urinating habits may indicate illness. In wet or chilly weather, he may naturally urinate more often. A persistent increase in voiding, however, may mean diabetes (diabetes mellitus), inability of the body to use sugar and starches. Untreated, the diabetic loses weight, no matter how much he eats, and eventually dies. A special diet and use of medicine now make it possible for a child with diabetes to live a full, normal life.

### EMERGENCIES

By the time your child has reached the age of six, you have probably become an old hand at cleaning wounds and soothing feelings. Also, by now your child probably has

learned from you how to take care of a simple cut or abrasion.

But emergencies still happen, no matter what the ages of your children may be. The following are some common household emergencies and what you should do about them. Always keep in mind, however, that for all but the most minor accidents, you should have your child checked by a doctor immediately.

### Bites and stings

#### *Animal bites* (cat, dog, squirrel, bat, or other):

Even if the animal is a pet, your child should be seen at once by a doctor. Often a booster shot for tetanus is called for even if treatment for prevention of rabies is not.

Try to capture the animal so he can be kept under observation until it is determined whether or not he is rabid.

#### *Insect bites* (bee, wasp, hornet, yellow jacket, ant, mosquito):

Remove the stinger, if any, with tweezers. Apply vinegar, diluted ammonia, or a thick paste of baking soda and water. Get medical help if your child shows an unusual reaction (paleness, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, drowsiness, convulsions).

#### *Snake bite:*

Try to kill the snake so it can be identified. There are four poisonous types in the United States—rattlesnakes, copperheads, moccasins, and coral snakes.

Go to a doctor or hospital as quickly as possible if you suspect your child has been bitten by a poisonous snake. Unless you have had instruction in the use of a snake bite or venom kit, you may do more damage than good by attempting to inject an antidote or use suction.

While waiting for the doctor or en route to the hospital, apply a constricting band just above the bite to slow the flow of venom into the body. Watch it carefully, though, as swelling from the bite may cause it to become too tight. Keep the child quiet and soothe him. Let the bitten limb hang down.

*Tick bite:*

Most ticks are harmless, but some carry Colorado tick fever or the more serious Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

If you live in a tick infested area, check your children twice daily. Look for ticks especially in hair and folds of skin. Remove ticks (from humans or animals) with tweezers. Be sure to get the head as well as the body. If it clings, loosen its hold by smearing it with grease, oil, or turpentine. Crush the tick (but not with your bare finger), flush it down the toilet, burn it, or drop it into turpentine or kerosene. Clean the wound with soap and water or mild antiseptic.

**Broken bones**

If you suspect a break or fracture, don't let your child use the limb or part and don't move it yourself. Leave him where he is, if possible. Keep him warm and call a doctor. If a bone fragment protrudes through the skin, cover the wound lightly with sterile dressing.

If you must move him, apply a splint to the injured limb.

*Arm:* a sling may be the easiest way to keep the arm immobile. Or use a pillow as suggested below.

*Leg:* slide a pillow under the leg. Be sure to include the joint at each end of the broken bone. Tie strips of cloth or bandage around the pillow at three- or four-inch intervals. A long board can be used if no pillow is available. Or tie the injured leg to the other leg, spacing the ties every six inches or so. Make sure they are not too tight.

*Back or neck:* If necessary, slide him on a board or door, but leave him where he is if you can. Get a doctor immediately.

**Burns**

Treat minor burns with petroleum jelly or a burn ointment. Soda and water paste or a cooled wet tea bag are also soothing. Cover with clean gauze or sterile dressing. Leave blisters alone. Any large or deep burns need medical attention promptly. Wrap the child in a sheet, or cover the area with clean cloths; keep the child warm; and get him to a hospital.

### Choking

Pick up the child by his feet and slap his back sharply. If a child is too heavy to pick up by his feet, place him in jackknife position over your shoulder or a chair back. If the object does not come out, go to a doctor or hospital at once.

If a child swallows something small and smooth, such as a fruit seed, button or small coin, check his bowel movements for a few days to be sure he has passed it. If he swallows a sharp object, such as a pin or a needle, call a doctor immediately.

### Convulsions

*(seizures, spells, fits)*

While a convulsion is alarming, don't lose your head. Most last only a few minutes. Your main effort is to keep the child from hurting himself. Place him on a bed or rug, away from sharp objects and furniture, *on his abdomen with chin raised*. In this position he can breathe easily, is less likely to draw saliva into his lungs, and cannot swallow his tongue.

Watch him closely. Do not put a child having convulsions into the bathtub. When it is over, put him to bed.

Call the doctor as soon as you can. Often a convulsion marks the onset of an infection or disease. Convulsions repeated at intervals and without fever may indicate epilepsy. The child with epilepsy will need medical supervision to keep him from having seizures.

### Cuts and bleeding

For a small cut, wash out well with soap and water and apply a clean bandage or freshly ironed piece of cloth. If the cut is deep and large, cover with sterile gauze, press firmly over the wound to stop the bleeding, and hold in place until you can get to a doctor or emergency room of the hospital. If bleeding doesn't stop, place a clean towel over the bleeding point and apply strong pressure. Add more towels or clean cloth as needed, but don't remove the first pads.

For severe bleeding, apply pressure to an area on the side of the wound toward the center of the body. Blood flowing to the hand, for instance, can be slowed down by gradually

and firmly pressing on the inner surface of the upper arm. If you have taken a first aid course, or have a first aid handbook, you will know where such pressure points are located.

### Ear troubles

If an insect has crawled in, stop the buzzing, which frightens the child, by dropping in a little lukewarm olive oil or mineral oil. The oil will still the insect and may wash it out. Don't attempt to dislodge any other object yourself (candy, pebble, bean). Get a doctor.

If a child complains of earache, call the doctor. Apply either heat or cold for temporary relief. Use a partially filled ice bag or hot water bottle with warm, not hot, water. Or let the child lie on a heating pad with temperature control set at a moderate degree. You can warm a small bag of salt in the oven and place it over the ear. Warmed salt keeps heat a long time.

### Particle in eye

Wash your hands before attempting to remove a particle from the eye. Tell the child not to rub his eye. To dislodge the speck, bring the upper lid down over the lower for a moment or two while the child looks upward. This causes tears which may wash the speck out. If this fails, look for the speck. If you see it, try to remove it by gently touching it with the corner of a clean handkerchief or small bit of sterile gauze folded over to make a point.

Washing the eye may help. Drop fluid into the eye with a medicine dropper or use an eyecup. Use only boiled water, cooled to room temperature, to which a quarter teaspoon of salt is added per cup. If the irritation continues, get a doctor's help.

### Nosebleed

Reassure the child and keep him quiet. Have him sit up and tell him to breathe through his mouth. Press gently against the nostril for five or ten minutes. If this does not stop the bleeding, try ice packs against the back of the neck or cold wet cloths over the child's nose. If bleeding contin-

ues, call the doctor. If nosebleeds are frequent or heavy, get the doctor's help to diagnose the cause.

If the child pushes an object into his nose, get a doctor to remove it.

### Poisoning

In accidental poisoning, no time should be lost in contacting your physician or the nearest hospital emergency room. While such contacts are being made, and pending further instructions from the physician, a few simple steps may be taken.

#### *External poisoning:*

When poisoning involves the external surface of the body, or the nasal or oral cavity, flushing or rinsing with water is useful in removing the poison. Acid poisons should be neutralized with weak alkali such as baking soda solution. Alkaline poisons can be neutralized with weak acids like diluted vinegar or lemon juice.

#### *Internal poisoning:*

If the poison swallowed is a strong alkali, strong acid, or contains kerosene or gasoline, *do not induce vomiting*. Instead, one should attempt to neutralize or dilute the poison. The same principle of neutralization of acid and alkaline poison applies here. In poisoning with alkali, a weak acid solution, such as a teaspoon of lemon juice or vinegar in a glass of water, should be given. In case of poisoning with strong acids, a glass of water with one to two teaspoons of baking soda may be given. Following this attempt to neutralize the poison, a glass of milk or water with raw egg white should be given. When fluid containing kerosene or gasoline or similar solvent is swallowed, one should try to dilute the poison by giving the child some water to drink.

If the poison swallowed is something other than those mentioned above, vomiting should be induced unless the child has become unconscious. By giving the child a glass of milk or water containing raw egg white, vomiting can be induced more easily. Sticking your finger or the blunt end of a spoon into the child's throat will usually cause him to vomit. Another method is to give him some lukewarm mustard in salt

solution to drink. As soon as retching occurs, the child should be placed on his abdomen with his head eight to ten inches below his hips. After the child has vomited, antidote specified on the label of the poison container should be administered if it is available. Otherwise, milk or raw egg white in water should be given. Always save the material vomited and the poison container to show to the physician.

### **Puncture wounds**

Gently press near the hole to encourage bleeding which will wash out the wound. Cover lightly until the doctor can see it, but don't try to close it with bandage or adhesive. Be sure to check with the doctor on the advisability of a tetanus shot, or if your child's shots are up to date, a booster dose.

### **Splinters**

Wash the area thoroughly. Soapsuds will help to soften the skin around the splinter and ease its removal. Use sterilized tweezer, needle, or knife point to pluck out the splinter. The tweezer may be less upsetting to the child, but sometimes it won't catch hold unless the splinter is eased up with a sharper instrument. To sterilize, pass the instrument through a flame or wipe with alcohol. Your child may be able to remove the splinter himself. He'll be much less upset if you let him try.

After the splinter is removed, press the area gently to make it bleed a bit, then wash carefully or apply a mild antiseptic. A sterile bandage may be needed to protect the area. A splinter deeply imbedded in the flesh should always be removed by a doctor.



# COMMON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

YOUR CHILD FROM 6 TO 12

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disease	first signs	incubation period*	prevention	how long contagious	what you can do
Chicken pox	Mild fever followed in 36 hours by small raised pimples which become filled with clear fluid. Scabs form later. Successive crops of pox appear.	2-3 weeks, usually 13-17 days.	None. Immune after one attack.	6 days after appearance of rash.	Not a serious disease; trim fingernails to prevent scratching; a paste of baking soda and water, or alcohol, may ease itching.
German measles (3-day measles).	Mild fever, sore throat or cold symptoms may precede tiny, rose-colored rash. Enlarged glands at back of neck and behind ears.	2-3 weeks, usually 18 days.	None. Immune after one attack. Girls are often exposed intentionally since later contracting the disease in early months of pregnancy may harm the unborn baby.	Until rash fades. About 5 days.	Not a serious disease, complications rare; give general good care and rest.
Measles.....	Mounting fever; hard, dry cough; running nose and red eyes for 3 or 4 days before rash which starts at hairline and spreads down in blotches. Small red spots with white centers in mouth (Koplik's spots) appear before the rash.	1-2 weeks, usually 10 or 11 days.	Ask your doctor about the measles vaccine now available.	Until rash disappears, usually 7 or 8 days.	May be mild or severe with complications of a serious nature; follow doctor's advice in caring for a child with measles, as it is a most treacherous disease.

Mumps.....	Fever, headache, vomiting; salivary glands near ear and toward chin at jaw line develop painful swelling. Other parts of body may be affected also.	11-26 days, usually around 18 days.	Is apt to be milder in childhood than later. Some doctors believe it best for little boys to get mumps over with before school age.	Until all swelling disappears.	Keep child in bed until fever subsides, indoors unless weather is warm.
Strep throat (septic sore throat) and scarlet fever (scarlatina).	Sometimes vomiting, headaches and fever before sudden and severe sore throat. If followed by fine rash on body and limbs, it is called scarlet fever.	1-7 days, usually 2-5.	Antibiotics may prevent or lighten an attack if doctor feels it wise.	7-10 days. When all abnormal discharge from nose, eyes, throat has ceased.	Responds to antibiotics, which should be continued for full course to prevent serious complications.
Whooping cough.....	At first seems like a cold with low fever and cough which changes at end of second week to spells of coughing accompanied by a noisy gasp for air which creates the "whoop."	7-21 days, usually around 7 days.	Injections of vaccine are usually given to all children in infancy; booster shots are given during childhood. If an unvaccinated child has been exposed, the doctor may want to give a protective serum promptly.	At least 4 weeks.	Child needs careful supervision by doctor throughout this taxing illness.

\*Incubation period is the usual amount of time which elapses between exposure to the disease and onset of first symptoms. For example, if a child is exposed to chicken pox, he can safely play with other children until 12 or 13 days afterwards. The following week, he should be kept away from other children since he may be in the early stages of the disease and it will be contagious before you note any symptoms.

## LESS COMMON INFECTIOUS DISEASES

disease	first signs	incubation period	prevention	how long contagious	what you can do
Infectious hepatitis (catarrhal	May be mild with few symptoms or accompanied by fever, headache, abdominal pain, nausea, diarrhea, general weariness. Later, yellow skin and white of eyes (jaundice), urine dark, and bowel movements chalk-like.	2-6 weeks, commonly 25 days.	Injection of gamma globulin gives temporary immunity if child is exposed.	May last 2 months or more.	May be mild or may require hospital care.
Infectious mononucleosis (glandular fever).	Sore throat, swollen glands on neck and elsewhere, sometimes a rash over whole body and jaundiced appearance, low persistent fever.	Probably 4-14 days or longer.	None.	Probably 2-4 weeks but mode of transmission is not clear.	Keep in bed while feverish; restrict activity thereafter.

Meningitis	May be preceded by a cold and/or earache, headache, stiff neck, vomiting, high temperature with convulsions or drowsy stupor; fine rash with tiny hemorrhages into the skin in certain types (meningococemia).	2-10 days.	Prompt treatment of bacterial infections of the nasopharynx and ear may prevent development.	Until recovery.	Immediate treatment is necessary. Take child to hospital if doctor unavailable. Continue treatment with antibiotics as long as doctor advises.
Polio (infantile paralysis or poliomyelitis).	Slight fever, general discomfort, headache, stiff neck, stiff back.	1-4 weeks, commonly 1-2 weeks.	Ask your doctor about the oral vaccine now available.	1 week from onset or as long as fever persists.	Hospital care is usually advised.
Rocky Mountain spotted fever.	Muscle pains, nosebleed occasionally, headache, rash on 3d or 4th day.	About a week after bite of infected tick.	Vaccinations can be given to a child who lives in heavily infested area. Protect from tick bite by the use of proper wearing apparel or tick repellent.	Spread only by infected ticks.	New drugs have improved treatment.
Smallpox	Sudden fever, chills, head and backache. Rash which become raised and hard, later blisters and scabs.	6-18 days, commonly 12.	Vaccination practically perfect protection. Vaccinate during first year and again before school.	Until all scabs disappear.	Doctor's care necessary.

## **YOUR COMMUNITY'S SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

You will find here a general picture of the services your community may have for children and families. Or services that your community may be able to develop. You will also find suggestions as to how you can learn more about the health, education, and welfare services in your particular area.

Each community in the United States tends to have its own special way of providing community services, although most follow a general pattern. The pattern in your community depends, in part, on the plans made by your local government, your county government, and your State government. Your community pattern also depends quite a bit on plans made by nongovernment groups.

If you live in a fairly large town or in a city, you probably have a Health and Welfare Council. This organization is apt to be supported by gifts from people in the community to the United Givers Fund. This Fund usually supports a number of voluntary services, such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, settlement houses, family counseling centers, and so on.

In order to learn what particular services your community has, you can find information through such organizations as the Health and Welfare Council, the local or State Department of Public Welfare, the local or State Department of Education, the local or State Department of Health.

### **Behavior and marriage problems**

For help with family problems, such as behavior problems of children or unhappiness between husband and wife, it is

possible to get skilled professional aid from such services as a child guidance clinic, an adult mental health clinic, or a family service agency. These are usually free or low cost services. Families who can afford higher fees may wish to consult a psychiatrist, a psychologist, or a marriage counselor who is in private practice. Such persons should be fully qualified professionals and belong to their professional associations, such as the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, or the National Association of Social Workers. Also, some churches or temples have religious leaders with special training for family counseling.

For information about child welfare services related to such needs as adoption, foster care, day care, neglect of children, care of children of working mothers, you can call your local Department of Public Welfare.

### Special education problems

If your child has a special education problem, such as learning to read, or if he is handicapped—such as in seeing, hearing, speaking, or in general learning—your school or Board of Education can tell you whether there are special aids for him in your school system. If your school system does not have the needed services available, you may find them through your family doctor, your Health and Welfare Council, or your State Department of Education or of Health.

### Health services

Along with the medical care available from your doctor, you may also find that your community has a number of free or low cost health services through clinics and hospitals. Many communities have free or low cost services for immunization against such illnesses as whooping cough, smallpox, diphtheria, polio, and measles.

As medical knowledge grows, more and more special health agencies develop for children and adults who have particular health problems, such as cerebral palsy, rheumatic fever, vision, hearing and speech difficulties, allergies, epilepsy, and so on. Your doctor is likely to know about many of

these services, but you can also find out about them through your local or State Department of Health.

### **Financial problems**

Families that have no means of support may be able to get financial aid through the Department of Public Welfare. Also, a family or members of a family may be eligible for funds from Social Security. The different kinds of financial help for families are so various that they cannot be adequately described here. You can find out about this in your particular community through your Department of Public Welfare or your Social Security office.

### **Adult education**

More and more adults are returning to school either part time or full time. Others may not take formal courses but join lecture and discussion groups. Continuing formal or informal educational activities are available in many communities for men and women who want further vocational training, general education, or courses in recreational interests such as arts and crafts. Local colleges and universities, high schools, religious organizations, and community centers and settlement houses are among the agencies that sponsor adult education programs. You can learn about these from local colleges and universities, religious organizations, your Health and Welfare Council, and Board of Education.

### **Parent education**

If you want to take part in a parent education group, you may find one through your Parent-Teacher Association, church or temple, or Home Bureau. Parents who wish to form parent education groups often can find professionally qualified leaders through local colleges or universities (especially departments of psychology, sociology, social work, home economics, nursing, and medicine). The Health and Welfare Councils in some communities also can suggest leaders for parent education groups. It is generally better to plan a series of parent education discussion group meetings rather

than a single lecture. A number of materials are available for such groups, including films and pamphlets.

### Recreation

Most communities have a number of recreational opportunities, both for children and adults. Formal organizations for boys and girls, such as the Scouts, 4-H clubs, YW and YMCA's, may already be known to you. You may find them listed in your telephone directory or through your Health and Welfare Council. Many religious organizations also support recreational activities. Perhaps you also have a city or county recreation department which sponsors playground, day camp, and other programs. Then, too, you will want to become acquainted with your State and National Parks.

**To sum it up: your community and your part in it**

Your community may have most of the services it needs for the health, welfare, education, and recreation of its children and families. It may have most, but not all, of the services needed. It may have only a few. Sometimes your chief problem lies in locating the special services you need for your particular family—or for other particular families. But sometimes, a community has serious gaps in services, especially in free or low cost ones or in services manned by well-trained staff.

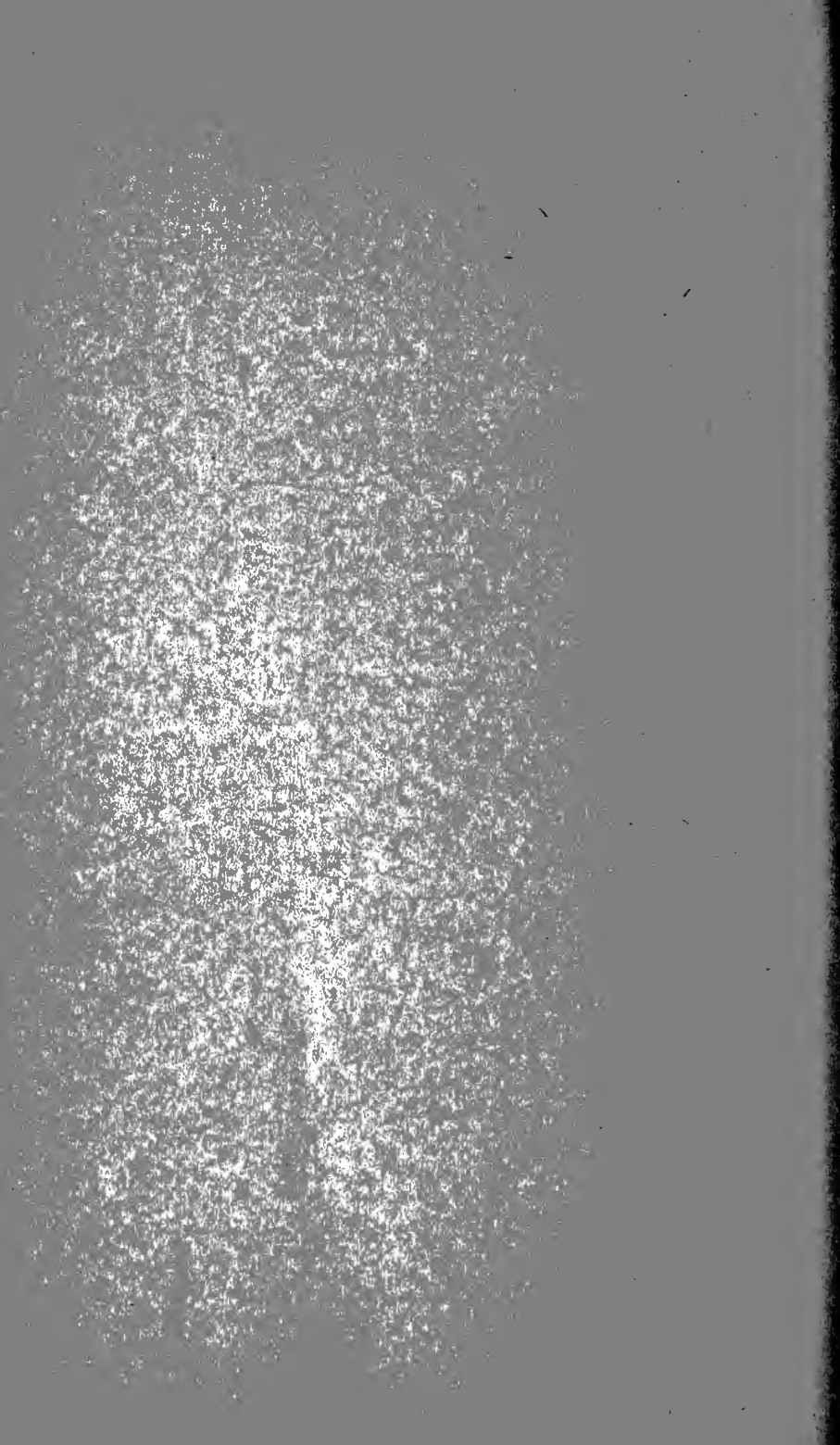
You and other parents can improve the services in your community. Not all parents have the time, energy, or interest in working for community improvement. It is often true that parents are able to work for their community more easily when their children are past the preschool age. If you wish to work for the improvement of community services for children and families, it is best to learn all you can about what is already available along these lines in your particular town. Especially in large communities, it is a more workable plan to focus your interest on one kind of service, such as education or mental health. You can join with other parents in your quest for knowledge.

It is also a good idea to find out what financial and professional consultative help may be available to your community from your State or Federal Government. There is apt



to be a good deal of help available to towns, cities, and counties from both State and Federal levels of government. You can learn about special consultative services and special State and Federal funds by writing to your various State Departments, or to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C.

You can also work for community improvement through nongovernmental organizations. If you have a Health and Welfare Council, this is likely to be a center of information as to the nongovernmental services your community already has and those that it needs.



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